

BYRON'S *MANFRED*
AND THE GREEK IMAGINARY

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ABSTRACT

Using Jerome J. McGann's suggestion that the earliest fragments of *Manfred* might have been written during his Levantine Tour (c 2 July 1809 – 14 July 1811), this thesis aims to offer a new perspective on Byron's *Manfred*, taking into account issues inherent in Byron's patrician upbringing, his experience of Ottoman Greece, his notion of a Classical tradition, and his previous Byronic heroes. The majority of motifs previously perceived as "Gothic" can thus be seen in a new light, namely, as "Greek". Another inspiration for a "Greek" reading of *Manfred* has been the fact that Western-European formative education and the literary canon have been based on works written by fifth-century BC Athenian writers, works which evoke a model of intellectual and political sophistication which I call, "the Greek imaginary" on the basis of its essentially fictive quality. However, the Greek imaginary formed part of a nobleman's education from the days of fifth-century Athens until well after Byron's age, by the time of which "Greekness" was a form of *noblesse oblige* amongst privileged North-Western Europeans, while "Greece" denoted a sense of the (imaginary) origin of Western-European culture. In effect, this thesis offers an insight into *Byron's* Greek imaginary, shaped by the poet's Classical education, his loyalty to the British patrician class, and his choice of reading matter from childhood onwards, as well as by what I call, his "inner Greek landscape", namely an inner mental construct formed during his Levantine Grand Tour, wherein the "Oriental" Greek landscape was tempered by the literary landscapes of his Classical primers. This study provides a detailed account of the ideological and cultural traditions in which Byron's intellect was formed, showing how the landscapes of Western Greece and Switzerland were conflated with the literary landscapes of Pausanias, Longinus and English pastoral poetry.

The Introduction surveys the Greek imaginary, its historical dissemination, its respective appropriations by the Roman Empire and by North-Western Europeans, especially by British Whigs, and its legacy within British poetry, especially regarding the description of mountain landscapes. Aiming to facilitate an insight into Byron's formative experiences, the chapter offers a survey of eighteenth-century Philhellenism and its socio-political conditions, namely the institution of the Grand Tour, burgeoning Orientalism, Winckelmann's aesthetic reassessment of the plastic arts (followed by the

trends of antiquarianism and the picturesque in British painting) and the French Revolution. Here, I draw an ideological and aesthetic distinction between the Greek imaginary and Gothicism and then I outline Byron's Greek imaginary.

Chapter One assesses Byron's intellectual formation from the time he was taught to read until the moment of his Grand Tour (c 1794 – 1809), reviewing it within the cultural and ideological framework of the British Whigs, whose education was based on the study of Ancient Greek and Latin and whose adult culture displayed the dissemination of tropes taken from Classical texts, for example the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries, within Whig gentlemen's clubs, and pastoral and travel writing. In effect, both Byron's comprehensive knowledge of Ancient Greek history and literature and his Enlightened Orientalism can be read as a product of his patrician upbringing.

Chapter Two follows the movements of Byron and John Cam Hobhouse in Western Greece prior to their arrival in Athens (c October – December 1809) with Pausanias and the Arnaout servants of the tyrant Ali Pasha as their guides and protectors. It is argued that Byron's "inner Greek landscape" (a collection of motifs which appear in all of his works from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and which I see epitomized by *Manfred*) was formed during the initial three months of his Grand Tour. Here, various elements of that "landscape", both topographical as well as literary and metaphorical, are established. This chapter also surveys Byron's antiquarianism, scholarly Orientalism (namely his studies in Romaic philology) and his divided attitude to the abstract legacy of Classical Greece and the contemporary Greeks. The last issue was epitomized by the concepts of the "mark of Cain" and the Byronic hero's tragic love for his other, (apparently a native of Ottoman Greece), which I see as the two *leitmotifs* of Byron's poetic fictions featuring the Byronic hero (namely from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* until *Manfred*). The chapter also charts the Platonic notion of *eros* and a quest for the *Kalon*, pivotal to Byron's concept of love as absent presence, and key to the Byronic hero's self-torture and self-sufficiency.

Chapter Three considers the events preceding and surrounding the composition of *Manfred* (April 1816 – May 1817), following Byron on his second Continental Tour, where his Greek imaginary was displaced onto the Belgian plains, German hills, Swiss mountains, the city-state of Venice and the Mekhitarist monastery of St Lazarus. This chapter observes the impact of Thomas Taylor's Neo-Platonist treatise, *A Dissertation of the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, matched by the impact of Byron's new friend, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, on Byron's subsequent composition of *Manfred*. The

influences of Taylor and Shelley are evident in Byron's respective views of suffering in life as a part of the soul's philosophical journey, and in his approach to the Promethean myth, Classical democracy, and the Gothic trope, the last serving as an excuse for a series of sceptical discussions culminating with the Diodati contest. Lastly, this chapter traces the influence of Shelley and his friend Peacock on Byron's reassessment of the Promethean and Christian myth during the time of his collaboration with the Mekhitarist monks of St Lazarus, when he was simultaneously writing *Manfred* and translating the apocryphal words of St Paul the Apostle, which can be read as approving of Manfred's ultimate self-sufficiency.

Following insights from the previous chapters, Chapter Four provides a close reading of *Manfred*, assessing the play as a form of simultaneous dialogue between Aeschylus, Plato, and Byron's own hero. While the hero's musings and monologues are seen as a reiteration of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, and while his notion of a (deflected) *eros* seems inherited from the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Oriental Tales*, the plot of the play seems to follow the course of an initiation rite (*theoria*) evoked in Plato's (and Taylor's) notion of the Eleusinian and Bacchic mysteries. During the course of the play, Manfred is seen as an initiate reclaiming his lost *eros*, which then enables him to behold the highest good, the *Kalon*, and to come to terms with the fact that he was, and will be, his own destroyer, whereby displacing the Almighty as the (unjust) ruler of the Universe.

In the conclusion, I recapitulate the key terms and concept of my thesis, the function and dissemination of *Manfred* as an ontologically subversive and politically ambitious reading play and as a contemporary myth. Lastly, the conclusion outlines the significance of *Manfred* within Byron's subsequent artistic development by ushering in a shift of Byron's focus onto collective and cosmic forces, and a more and more impersonal hero.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BLJ</i>	<i>Byron's Letters and Journals</i> , ed. Leslie A. Marchand, 13 vols (London: John Murray, 1973–94)
<i>CHP</i>	<i>Childe Harold's Pilgrimage</i>
<i>EBSR</i>	<i>English Bards and Scotch Reviewers</i>
<i>TVOJ</i>	<i>The Vision of Judgement</i>
<i>CPW</i>	Lord Byron: <i>The Complete Poetical Works</i> , ed. Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980–93)
<i>CMP</i>	Lord Byron: <i>The Complete Miscellaneous Prose</i> , ed. Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)
<i>Diary</i>	John William Polidori: <i>The Diary of Dr John William Polidori, 1816, Relating to Shelley, Byron, etc.</i> , ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Elkin Mathews, 1911)
<i>Life</i>	Thomas Moore: <i>The Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron</i> (London: John Murray, 1866)
<i>MLR</i>	Thomas Love Peacock: “Ahrimanes”, ed. A. B. Young, <i>The Modern Language Review</i> 4. 2 (Belfast: Modern Humanities Research Association, January 1909), 217–230
<i>Letters</i>	Percy Bysshe Shelley: <i>The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley</i> , ed. Roger Ingpen, 2 vols (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd, 1909)
<i>Travels</i>	John Cam Hobhouse, Right Honourable Lord Broughton: <i>Travels in Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey, 1809 & 1810. Revised and corrected edition</i> , 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1858)
<i>Recollections</i>	John Cam Hobhouse, Right Honourable Lord Broughton: <i>Recollections of a Long Life</i> , ed. Lady Dorchester, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1909)
<i>RR B I-II</i>	<i>The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers</i> , ed. Donald H. Reiman, 9 vols (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1972), Part B: <i>Byron and Regency Society Poets</i> , 5 vols (vols I-II)
<i>RGG</i>	<i>The Rough Guide to Greece</i> , eds. Lance Chilton, Marc Dubin, Nick Edwards, <i>et al.</i> , 12 th edition (New York, London and Delhi: Rough Guides, 2008)
<i>Works</i>	<i>Works of Lord Byron, with his Letters and Journals</i> , ed. Thomas Moore, 17 vols (London: John Murray, 1833)

INTRODUCTION: THE GREEK IMAGINARY

Byron's *Manfred* has been the subject of considerable critical attention – praised, reviled, teased for a myriad of meanings – since its publication in 1817. Early and subsequent opinion, as ever, has been divided.¹ Any critical interpretation of *Manfred* is, however, complicated by the fact that the play had been written over a period much larger than Byron's usual time of composition. On the grounds of *Manfred*'s rough draft and manuscript, Jerome J. McGann speculates that the play might have originated around the time of Byron's Grand Tour in Greece. Thus, "Ashtaroath's Song", its earliest fragment, had been

written on a small sheet of very different paper, which is in fact watermarked [18]08; and since [Byron's] habit was to use his paper soon after acquiring it, this song may have been written in 1809 or 1810 while he was in the Levant.²

The Levantine provenance of *Manfred* had been speculated on in the early study of Byron authored by Byron's acquaintance and fellow-traveller on the Levant, John Galt. To illustrate the impression Byron gave while on-board sailing towards Malta in 1809, Galt did not quote from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* but from *Manfred*:

My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger;
(II.ii: 51-56),³

adding that "the description [Byron] has given of Manfred in his youth, was of himself".⁴ Thus, the character of Manfred can be seen as either contemporaneous with or previous to Harold. Moreover, Galt asserts that Byron's poetry was original inasmuch as it relied on a specific Greek landscape, remembered from his Levantine Grand Tour (ibid, 124-125). McGann's suggestion that *Manfred* was much earlier,

¹ For an account of the reception of *Manfred* across the Western world see Richard A. Cardwell, *The Reception of Byron in Europe* (London and New York: Thoemmes-Continuum, 2005), 2 vols. Henceforth Cardwell I-II. Also see Boleslaw Taborski, *Byron and the Theatre* (Universität Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1972). Henceforth Taborski.

² See George Gordon, Lord Byron, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-1989), Vol IV (1986), p. 464. Henceforth CPW I-VII. Despite his above claim, McGann believes that the two "pre-exile" fragments of *Manfred* were written only after Byron's return from Greece (i.e. "Astaroth's Song" in 1812/13 and "Incantation" in 1813/14), and that they were probably inspired by Goethe's *Faust* I (CPW IV, pp. 464, 466). Moreover, McGann believes that the factual background of the poem was the collapse of Byron's marriage and his flight from England. See George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Critical Edition of the Major Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 1038. Henceforth McGann 1986.

³ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, "Manfred, a Dramatic Poem", CPW IV, pp. 51-102 (p.72).

⁴ See John Galt, *The Life of Lord Byron*, 2nd edition (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1833 [1830]), p. 61. Henceforth Galt.

possibly Levantine, in provenance was anticipated by Robert F. Gleckner. In spite of his belief that Byron began *Manfred* in Switzerland in 1816, Gleckner finds the parallels between the *Giaour* and *Manfred* so striking that he admits to being

sorely tempted to credit [Byron's] own description of the "Incantation" as 'a Chorus of an unpublished Witch Drama, which was begun some years ago',

presumably in 1813, simultaneously with *The Giaour*.⁵ According to Gleckner, *Manfred* (alongside *A Dream*, *Darkness* and *Prometheus*) shows a thrust "towards myth, not mere self-revelation or the display of a bleeding heart" (Gleckner, 251), while the play's eponymous hero comprises "Faust, Prometheus and the Gothic villain", all three of whom represent "fundamental humanness" (254). However, Byron's "Faustian" intertext can be reiterated as "Alexandrian", since the legends of Alexander of Macedon as a transgressive magus, related in Byron's Latin primers, anticipated the latter-day legends of Johannes Faustus.⁶ The comparability of *Manfred* to the Gothic hero-villain, asserted by Gleckner, McGann and Caroline Franklin, seems to be more problematic, since Byron's attitude to the Gothic genre seems to have been divided, and he did not wish *Manfred* to be read, or staged, as a Gothic melodrama.⁷ Byron's

⁵ See Robert F. Gleckner, *Byron and the Ruins of Paradise* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 254. Henceforth Gleckner. Alan Rawes' recent study assesses Byron's poetic experimentality and recycling of past fragments in a manner which corroborates McGann's and Gleckner's speculations. See Alan Rawes, *Byron's Poetic Experimentation* (Ashgate, 2000). Henceforth Rawes 2000.

⁶ In his Harrow primers, namely in the works of Plutarch, Arrian and Lucan, Byron could have found the stories about Alexander the Great pursuing forbidden knowledge and performing magical rituals. See Arrian, *Anabasis Alexandrii and Indica*, transl. E. Iliff Robinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann, 1967); Plutarch, "On the fortune and virtue of Alexander", *Moralia*, transl. F.C. Babbitt, vol 4 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann, 1957), pp. 319-345. Also Plutarch, "Alexander", *Lives*, transl. B. Perrin, vol 7 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann, 1958), pp. 223-349. Also Lucan, *Civil War*, transl. P. F. Widdows (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), x, pp. 249-250. The figure of Alexander the Great comprised the personas of a young man, a magus, and a man young enough to be a successful lover. Similarly, *Manfred* is a patrician, a magus, and a young man, on whose "brow / The seal of middle age hath scarce been set" (II.i: 49-50), which provides an important contrast with Marlowe's and Goethe's Faustian heroes, the latter of whom pacts with the devil in order to restore his *eros*. For detailed comparison between Goethe's *Faust* and Byron's *Manfred*, see E. M. Butler, *Byron and Goethe* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1956), pp. 29-37. Also Fred Perry, "'Much in the Mode of Goethe's Mephistopheles': *Faust* and Byron", *International Faust Studies: Adaptation, Reception, Translation*, ed. Lorna Fitzsimmons (London: Continuum International Publishing, 2008), pp. 107-123. Henceforth Fitzsimmons 2008.

⁷ According to Caroline Franklin, the hero of Byron's *Manfred* comes "straight out of Gothic melodrama: a sinful aristocrat whose powers verged on the supernatural". See Caroline Franklin, *Byron: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 29. Henceforth Franklin. This insight is shared by McGann, who thinks *Manfred* exemplifies "the melodrama so prevalent in his own day", namely the Gothic melodrama, and who in his abridged version of Byron's works teaches that the literary background of the play is "Gothicism". See Jerome J. McGann, *Fiery Dust: Byron's Poetic Development* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 227. Henceforth McGann 1968. Also George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Critical Edition of the Major Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 1038. Henceforth McGann 1986. Carol Margaret Davison

dramatic intentions and his contrary attitude to the Gothic within *Manfred* will be further discussed in a later section of this chapter. But to return to *Manfred*'s Ancient Greek intertext, which was quite obvious to contemporary reviewers. Thus the unsigned review by Francis Jeffrey:

In the tone and pitch of the composition, as well as in the character of the diction in the more solemn parts, the piece before us reminds us much more of the Prometheus of Aeschylus, than of any more modern performance. The tremendous solitude of the principal person – the supernatural beings with whom alone he holds communion – the guilt – the firmness – the misery – are all points of resemblance to which the grandeur of the poetic imagery only gives

reiterates the views of Franklin and McGann, stating that “*Manfred* offers up a sustained portrait of an undying, guilt-haunted Gothic hero-villain”. See Carol Margaret Davison, *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1764-1824* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), p. 171. Henceforth Davison. However, Byron hated the Gothic melodrama throughout his life, despite his composition of the Gothic melodrama *Werner*, started during his membership of the Drury Lane Committee board. See Peter J. Manning, “The Sins of the Fathers: *Werner*”, *The Plays of Lord Byron: Critical Essays*, eds. Robert F. Gleckner and Bernard Beatty (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1997), pp. 363-378 (pp. 363-364). Henceforth Gleckner and Beatty. In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, Byron introduces his contempt for the contemporary British stage, epitomized by pantomimes and Gothic melodramas, calling Matthew Gregory “Monk” Lewis (1775-1818), an eminent Gothic author and Whig MP who later became his friend, “Apollo’s sexton” on the grounds of his highly commercial Gothic tragedy, *The Castle Spectre* (1797). See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “English Bards and Scotch Reviewers”, *CPW I*, pp. 227-264 (lines 560-706, 265-283). Henceforth *EBSR*. In *Hints from Horace*, Byron seems to explain his dislike of Gothic melodrama by stating his antipathy to the stage representation of ghosts. See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “Hints from Horace”, *CPW I*, pp. 288-319 (lines 289-292). His animus towards Gothic melodrama was held throughout his career. In a letter to Douglas Kinnaird (25 March 1817), Byron calls *Manfred* “the very Antipodes of the stage” because “the persons are all magicians – ghosts - & the evil principle – with a mixed mythology of my own” (*BLJ V*, pp. 194-195), thus suggesting that the play might be *seen* as a Gothic melodrama when staged, rather than declaring that his “metaphysical drama” (*ibid*) was meant to be read as a Gothic text. According to Michael Gamer, Byron’s views on Gothic drama, and especially on the presentation of ghosts, were shared by the majority of British writers of his day, including Francis Jeffrey, Walter Scott, Joanna Baillie, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the actor-manager Philip Kemble, who opposed the stage presentation of ghosts even in the case of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. See Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 130-162. Henceforth Gamer. Notably, Byron reprimanded Lewis only for his Gothic melodrama, and not for his Gothic classic, *The Monk* (1796), on the grounds of which Lewis was accused of anti-Christian obscenity and blasphemy, additionally sparked by public whispers of his (homo)sexual transgressions, both of which resulted in a public scandal which caused Lewis to stand down from his Parliamentary activity and to withdraw to his plantation in Jamaica (Gamer, pp. 74-75, 81). According to Margaret Davison, Gothic novels were considered a respectable read inasmuch as they “participated in constructing and promoting a sense of British national and religious identity” (Davison, p. 45). Michael Gamer reiterates Davison’s point by indicating that “Gothic” in the eighteenth century suggested a patriotic antiquarian interest in medieval English history and texts (Gamer, pp. 48-49), going on to distinguish between “masculine” and “feminine” Gothic novels, the former of which were considered a patriotic, serious read, harnessing antiquarianism and a historical approach to the British legacy (e.g. Walpole) rather than focusing on “romance”, which was “feminine” (e.g. Radcliffe). The gendering and patriotic / antiquarian appropriation of the Gothic novel was sourced in the English animus against German literature, to which the Gothic novel and drama were heavily indebted, as well as in the anti-Revolutionary mood of the late eighteenth century (Gamer, pp. 166, 222-223 n 91). According to Davison, the Gothic “participated in” the Enlightened debates on “social progress, scientific technologies and political revolution” while simultaneously contradicting the premises of the Enlightenment by making the irrational central to its discourse (Davison, p. 45). Regardless of his distaste for Gothic melodrama, Byron did use the Gothic trope in the context of, and in favour of, Enlightened scepticism, as I will show in the next section of this chapter, and in Chapter Three.

a more striking effect. The chief differences are, that the subject of the Greek poet was sanctified and exalted by the established belief of his country, and that his terrors are nowhere tempered with the sweetness which breathes from so many passages of his English rival.⁸

Byron, for his part, proudly owned Aeschylus as his dramatic intertext, writing to John Murray (12 October 1817):

Of the Prometheus of Aeschylus I was passionately fond as a boy – (it was one of the Greek plays we read thrice a year at Harrow) indeed that and the “Medea” – were the only ones – except the “Seven before Thebes” which ever much pleased me (*BLJ* V, 268).

Inspired by Byron’s own words regarding the intertext and the composition of *Manfred*, and by the insights of Galt, McGann, Gleckner and Rawes, my thesis aims to establish a viable link between *Manfred* and the complex layers of Byron’s Greek contexts and experiences. In the process, I intend to show that Byron’s Classical education was pivotal to his approach to history, politics, literary canon and contemporary languages.⁹

Despite strong and persistent interest in the autobiographical nature of *Manfred*, not one of these readings places the autobiographical approach within the ideological and socio-political context that shaped Byron and his contemporaries.¹⁰ The said context was conditioned by the Classical canon, which, in return, pivoted around a certain set of beliefs concerning the political and aesthetic traditions of Ancient Greece. Apart from offering insight into a certain pattern espoused by English gentlemen

⁸ n. a. [Francis Jeffrey], “Manfred; a Dramatic Poem. By Lord Byron”, *Edinburgh Review*, XXVII (August 1817), 418-431. Repr. *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers*, ed. Donald H. Reiman, 9 vols (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1972), Part B: *Byron and Regency Society Poets*, 5 vols (vols I-II), II, pp. 881-888 (p. 888). Henceforth *RR* B I-II.

⁹ Thus James Chandler: “Byron was a polyglot. He cites sources and sometimes writes himself in French, Spanish, Italian, Latin, and Greek. Passages in these languages occasionally run to considerable length. The number of readers who command *all* of these languages nowadays is not great, not even in scholarly circles.” See James Chandler, “Lord Byron, The Complete Poetical Works, Vols 1-3, ed. by Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-81)”, *Modern Philology* 80.2 (November 1982), 208-211 (p. 211). According to Chandler, McGann’s editorial approach does not highlight Byron’s Classical intertextuality (*ibid*). On the new historicist debate regarding contemporary referentiality, see Jerome J. McGann, *Byron and Romanticism*, ed. James Soderholm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 203-205. Henceforth Soderholm. Also *Rethinking Historicism: Critical Readings in Romantic History*, ed. Marjorie Levinson *et al.* (Basil Blackwell, 1989). Henceforth Levinson. Despite voicing a dislike of the premises put forward by literary historicists, which were based on “the Classics” (Soderholm, p. 205), McGann does associate the Byronic hero with Prometheus and Socrates (*ibid*, pp. 290-291), and notes the similarity between *Manfred* and *Prometheus Bound* in his commentary on Byron’s play.

¹⁰ Of those readings, I shall only mention McGann’s opinion that “the factual background of the poem is, of course, the collapse of Byron’s marriage” (McGann 1986, p. 1038), and that *Manfred* presents a public confession of Byron’s guilt towards Augusta Leigh and Lady Byron (*CPW* IV, p. 466). A similar opinion was recently espoused by Paul D. Barton in his study *Lord Byron’s Religion: A Journey into Despair* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), p. 96. Henceforth Barton.

travellers with regard to landscape, which was “seen” and described predominantly in Classical tropes, the Classical canon also includes the tropes of marred legacy, or ancestral curse, manifest in dispossession, incest and / or vampirism. Notably, all of those tropes are espoused in *Manfred*, effectively attesting to Byron’s comprehensive Classical education, matched by his patrician (Whig) republicanism and complemented by his authentic and original experience of the Levant, where contemporary Oriental influences merged with the vanished memories of Hellenic, of Classical, namely with the Greek imaginary.

The definition of the Greek imaginary

Within this thesis, I shall perpetually return to the term, the Greek imaginary, by which I refer to the compound of Greek heritage in the Western-European canon, as well as to *Byron’s* Greek imaginary, namely the poet’s adaptation and appropriation of the above concept within the frame of his own experience of the Levant, which will be analyzed in Chapter Two. Let us first look into the complex meaning of the term itself. In his recent study, where the notion of Ancient Greece is assessed by the juxtaposition of archeological evidence and the writings of fifth-century BC Greek writers, Ian Morris suggests the use of term “Classical Greece” in a “wider sense, meaning the canonically defined core periods of Greek and Roman civilization, from roughly 700 BC to AD 500”.¹¹ McGann’s erstwhile pupil Marjorie Levinson, whose approach conciliates the new historicist analysis of contemporary referentiality with a sensitivity to the more “immanent” approaches (i.e. Jacques Lacan and poststructuralism), aims for a similar consensus. Indicating that “the Greeks” (i.e. Ancient Greek legacy) is a vast trope, including yet somehow surpassing that of the “Classical” (Levinson, 56), she uses the

¹¹ See Ian Morris, “Archeologies of Greece”, *Classical Greece: Ancient histories and modern archeologies*, ed. Ian Morris (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 46. Henceforth Morris. According to Morris, “Hellenism”, or Greekness, was the term forged by Herodotus, who provided the Western-European literary legacy with its earliest surviving definition of “the Hellenic” (*to Ellenikon*). The term denotes those “one in blood and one in language; those shrines of the gods belong to us all in common, and there are our customs, bred of a common upbringing” (Herodotus 8.144.2), thus a linguistic and ideological unity, forged in the context of the ongoing Persian War (480-479 BC) (Morris, p. 20). The notion of “Classical Greece” coexisted with that of later, Hellenistic period, when the successors of Alexander the Great adopted the ways and mores of their Oriental neighbours (i.e. the Egyptians and the Persians) rather than imposing the habits of Greek oligodemocracies on the conquered territories. See Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990). In the Hellenistic period, the Roman attitude to Greece mirrored that of fifth-century BC Greece towards the Persians. In a parallel with Greece, Rome started as a small, exclusive patrician democracy which subsequently fed on the superior intellectual legacy of its Greek other.

term “Hellenism” to denote “the distinctively humane consciousness of the Greeks (their arts, letters, religion) ... aligned with their social formations” (ibid, 61). However, Levinson indicates that the representation of social relations which engendered Hellenism “is not just missing, it is figured in a certain way by its absence” (ibid), thus reiterating the pivotal problematic of man’s state, defined as early as in Plato’s writings, where the notion of (Greek) civilization was felt to be essentially imaginary, based on a certain absence at its very core. This absence was deftly camouflaged by Plato’s contemporaries, Herodotus and Aristotle. While Herodotus’ notion of *to Ellenikon* was primarily linguistic, Aristotle’s account of the official beginning of Athenian democracy, marked by Solon’s laws, which, as he states, were written in eighth-century BC Athens, runs counter to contemporary archeological evidence, attesting to eighth-century BC Greece being a Bronze Age society, loosely united by the ubiquitous “Bacchic” mysteries celebrating death and resurrection, which were overtaken from the Egyptians.¹² However, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Philhellenists saw the imaginary Ancient Greece, evoked by fifth-century BC writers, as the fountainhead of Europeanness, wherein patrician Europeans were separated from their others, the ignorant mob, on the grounds of their awareness of their inherent “Greekness” (Morris, 23).¹³ In effect, Hellenism and Orientalism sprouted simultaneously as distinctive scholarly branches in the middle of the eighteenth century, with Hellenism focusing on the remains of Classical Greece and the scholarship of the Ancient Greek language, while Orientalism spanned the studies of all “other” languages, cultures and influences prevalent in Greece and Eastern Mediterranean (e.g. Turkish, Albanian, Macedonian, Armenian, Vlachian, Arabic, *et al.*), yet seeing those others as aberrant and

¹² For archeological evidence attesting to an Oriental cultural hegemony in the daily religious habits of Continental Greece, see James Whitley, “Protoattic pottery: a contextual approach”, and Herbert Hoffmann, “The riddle of the Sphinx: a case study in Athenian immortality symbolism” (Morris, pp. 51-70, pp. 71-80). The following quotation from Cicero’s *Laws*, extolling the uses of the Eleusinian Mysteries (originally derived from the Egyptian cults of life and resurrection dedicated to Isis and Osiris), demonstrates how Hellenism and Orientalism coexisted in the legacy of the Greek imaginary, by that time appropriated by the Romans: “Among the many excellent and divine institutions that your Athens had developed and contributed to human life, there is none, in my opinion, better than these mysteries, by which we have been brought forth from our rustic and savage mode of existence, cultivated and refined into a state of civilization; and as these rites are called ‘initiations’ so, in truth, have we learned from them the first principles of life and have gained the understanding, not only to live happily, but also to die with better hope”. See Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On the Commonwealth and On the Laws*, ed. James E. G. Zetzel (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 143.

¹³ For instance: While on his Tour, a young Whig was encouraged to keep a detailed diary of his travelling experience, which would later form the basis of a travelogue, published in a periodical or as a book. The travelogue was a reiteration of the Classical *periegesis*, epitomized by Pausanias’ *Description of Greece* (*Tes Ellados Periegesis*).

underdeveloped (Morris, 21). On the grounds of this absence of what Lacan called, the Real, Levinson's "Hellenism" and Morris' "Classical Greece" could be reiterated as, "the Greek imaginary".¹⁴

a. The legacy of the Greek Imaginary in British poetry

According to the studies of McGann, Levinson, William D. Brewer and Charles E. Robinson, the Greek imaginary can be seen as the common grounds on which the English poets, mutually as distinct with regard to their respective ideologies as were Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley and Byron, exchanged their ideas of poetry, politics and "Nature".¹⁵ Shelley acknowledged this collective debt in the Preface to *Hellas*: "We are all Greeks – our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece", thus corroborating Morris' argument on the inherent "Greekness" of the eighteenth-century patrician Europeans (see above).¹⁶ The shared Greek legacy of the above-mentioned poets is most visible within the concept of primordial and utopian "Nature", espoused and disseminated by the pastoral lyric genre, which started in Ancient Greece.¹⁷

¹⁴ For Lacan's distinction between the Real and the Imaginary, see Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Principles of Psychoanalysis*, ed. / transl. David Macey (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1994), pp. 279-280.

¹⁵ See William D. Brewer, *The Shelley-Byron Conversation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 22. Henceforth Brewer. Recalling his contemporary discussions of Wordsworth with Shelley, Byron later told Thomas Medwin: "I do remember reading some of [Wordsworth's] things with pleasure. He had once a feeling of Nature, which he carried almost to a deification of it – that's why Shelley liked his poetry". See Thomas Medwin, *Conversations with Lord Byron*, ed. J. E. Lovell (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 194. Henceforth Medwin. Within McGann's reading of *Manfred*, and in Charles E. Robinson's comparative study of Byron and Shelley, the pastoral, or "Nature", seems to be encrypted as "Wordsworth". See, respectively, Soderholm, pp. 173-201, and Charles E. Robinson, *Shelley and Byron: The Snake and Eagle Wreathed in Fight* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 18-20. Henceforth Robinson.

¹⁶ See Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Hellas", *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. Selected and edited by Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977), pp. 406-440 (p. 409). Henceforth Reiman and Powers.

¹⁷ According to Stuart Curran, the pastoral offered "immanent" escape into "Nature" (constructed by Classical tropes) from which to allegorize contemporary ideology and history alike, as did Milton in *Paradise Lost*. See Stuart Curran, "The Pastoral", *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 100-142. Henceforth Curran. In synchronicity with Curran, McGann indicates that Milton "established the model that, in place of a failed social order, one might establish the order of the inward paradise" (Levinson 1989, p. 96). By stating that *Manfred* was intertextual of Milton's *Lycidas* and *Samson Agonistes* (Soderholm, p. 30), McGann indirectly brings to mind Milton's indebtedness to the pastoral. Stephen Cheeke in his influential study argues that "the 'Alpeineism' (sic) of [*Manfred*] stands for the freedom from the determining forces of any place", with "Alpineism" arguably standing for the pastoral. See Stephen Cheeke, *Byron and Place: History, Translation, Nostalgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 89.

As an eminent Classicist and a Philhellene, who preceded Byron by two centuries at Trinity College, Cambridge, Milton was a natural “Vorbild” for Byron and for Shelley.¹⁸ However, Milton’s, Marlowe’s and Byron’s respective words on mind being its own place were initially anticipated by the attitude of Ancient Greek philosophers. Thus Epictetus, who featured in Byron’s confiscated library:

The ignorant man’s position and character is this: he never looks to himself for benefit or harm, but to the world outside him. The philosopher’s position and character is that he always looks to himself for benefit and harm (*Enchiridion* 48).¹⁹

Apart from the pastoral, another element of Byron’s “Miltonic” intertext is that of the Sublime, which again pertains to the Classical canon. While the pastoral elements were indebted to the Classical lyric, the notion of the Romantic Sublime is sourced in the concept of Classical rhetoric, to some extent modelled on Homer’s epics. Within her study of the trope of mountain landscape in the British literary tradition, Marjorie Nicolson indicates that Milton’s *Paradise Lost* was written in the style advocated by Longinus’ *On the Sublime* (*Peri Hypsous*), and that Milton was “the first English poet to practice the ‘Aesthetics of the Infinite’, the transfer of vastness from God to interstellar space, then to terrestrial mountains”.²⁰ On the grounds of his Classical training, Byron might have followed Milton’s lead in going back to Longinus, where

¹⁸ According to McGann, Milton was pivotal to Byron’s intellectual formation, especially with regard to his concept of the hero-villain and sceptical dilemmas (Soderholm, pp. 22-23). However, Martyn Corbett indicates that Byron’s notion of hell is essentially un-Miltonic in being placed within the dramatic hero and not outside of himself, as in the case of Milton’s Satan. See Martyn Corbett, *Byron and Tragedy* (Basingstoke and London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1988), p. 42. Henceforth Corbett. Similarly disputing Byron’s indebtedness to Milton’s *Paradise Lost* in the case of *Manfred*, Katherine Kernberger indicates that Milton, too, had a predecessor in Christopher Marlowe, whose Mephistopheles anticipates Milton’s Satan in defining hell as “a state of mind, an intellectual, not a physical place”. See Katherine Kernberger, “Manfred’s Quarrel with Immortality: Freeing the Self”, *Liberty and Poetic License: New Essays on Byron*, eds. Bernard Beatty, Tony Howe and Charles E. Robinson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), pp. 60-71 (p. 63). Henceforth Beatty 2008. According to Thomas Moore, Milton “incurred some remark of disgrace” while in Cambridge, whereby offering yet another parallel with Byron. See Thomas Moore, *The Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron* (London: John Murray, 1866), p. 65. Henceforth *Life*. On the Philhellenic connexion between Milton and Byron, see Joan Blythe, “Byron and Greek Independence: The Miltonic Vision”, *Byron: A Poet for All Seasons*, ed. Marios Byron Raizis (Athens: University of Athens, 2000), pp. 178-187. Henceforth Raizis 2000. According to Thomas Medwin, Shelley saw Aeschylus’ Prometheus “the type of Milton’s Satan”. See Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Henry Buxton Forman (Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, 1913), p.161. Henceforth Medwin 1913. Hence, perhaps, the popular conflation of Milton and Aeschylus within the context of Byron’s Swiss compositions.

¹⁹ See Epictetus, “*Enchiridion*”, *The Discourses and Manual, Together with Fragments of His Writings*, transl. P. E. Matheson (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1916. Repr. Evinity Publishing, Inc, 2009). For the evidence of Epictetus’ works in Byron’s library, see Andrew Nicholson, “Appendix: Sale Catalogues (1816 and 1827)”, *Lord Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 231-254 (p. 235). Henceforth *CMP*.

²⁰ See Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1959), p. 273. Henceforth Nicolson.

the tropes of gods and mountains are conflated so as to feature as the example of sublime rhetoric. I shall elaborate on the Longinian Sublime and its echoes in Byron's impressions of landscape in Chapters Two and Three. Byron was familiar with Burke's notion of the Natural Sublime, as shown in his lines from the Third Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (stanza lxii), describing the Alps as

(...) icy halls
Of *cold sublimity*, where forms and falls
The avalanche - the thunderbolt of snow!
All which expands the spirit, yet appals
Gather around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below
(593-598) [*italics mine*].²¹

In *Manfred*, however, the Sublime is epitomized not by the Alps, but by the Phantom of Astarte, initially suggested as “a thing I dare not think upon” (II.ii: 188) yet effecting the hero's emotional catharsis, “a feeling” approximating Plato's *Kalon* – “the golden secret” which “hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense” (III.i: 13-18). In antiquity, a similar illumination was suggested as taking place during the Eleusinian Mysteries, originally a Bacchic cult which subsequently evolved into a secular pilgrimage, its frame of reference informing the writings of nearly all Classical writers, most importantly the writings of Plato. Thus, Byron seems much closer to the Ancient Greek notion of the Sublime, suggested by Homer, Plato, and Longinus and reiterated by Kant, than to that of Wordsworth, whose notion of the Sublime as

that blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:²²

²¹ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto The Third”, *CPW* II, pp. 76-119 (p. 100). Henceforth *CHP* I-IV. According to Burke, the impression of the Sublime was provoked by great and terrible objects, while the sense of the Beautiful was aroused by small and pleasing ones. In effect, the former inspires admiration, and the second, love. An experience of the sublime characteristically encompasses two stages, the first of which begins with an interposition of an overwhelming force that initially creates a blockage. In the second stage, the blockage grows into an irresistible force that takes hold of mind and emotions and, upon receding, leaves one with a new sense of self and an admiration for the blocking power. See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. T. J. Boulton (London: Routledge, 1958). On Byron's indebtedness to Burke, who was an eminent Whig rhetorician, see Matthew Bevis, *The Art of Eloquence: Byron, Dickens, Tennyson, Joyce* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 56-57, 59, 64, 77.

²² See William Wordsworth, “Lines Composed A Few Miles Above the Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798”, *Poems*, ed. John. O. Hayden, 2 vols (London and New York: Penguin, 1977), pp. 357-362 (p. 358) (lines 37-41). Henceforth Hayden I-II. Michael G. Cooke deduces Wordsworth's attitude espoused in *Tintern Abbey* from the (Classical) stoicism of Marcus

is much more rational as it is grounded in real nature. For this reason, McGann's attempt to read *Manfred* through "Wordsworthian" lenses (Soderholm, 173-201) seems to disregard what appears to resemble a mystic, *quasi*-Eleusinian initiation and catharsis, pivotal to the development of the play's plot and to the hero's baffling self-sufficiency. The form of the Sublime espoused in Byron's play and by its eponymous hero was anticipated in Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, which was in turn inspired by Joseph Addison's "The Pleasures of the Imagination", published in *The Spectator* (1712). Great size and grandeur were no longer its necessary attributes. Instead, it was an inner revelation, or illumination, a moment where the gap between the inner and the outer (i.e. self and other) is closed.²³ As I will show in Chapter Three, Byron's Sublime looks back to the Ancient Greek tropes recycled by Longinus in order to "feel" the *Kalon*, namely the Platonic synthesis of the Real and the (Greek) imaginary. Again, this "anti-Wordsworthian" approach was anticipated by Byron's Whig upbringing, within which "Nature" was little more than a set of pastoral clichés, a subjective landscape determined by man.²⁴ Raised as a Whig Philhellene, Byron was the poet of Classical tradition and civilization, forever espousing a landscape which consisted of Classical tropes, taken from the Greek imaginary, to which the absence of the Real was inherent. Owing to the intricate, sophisticated and systematic references to Ancient Greek intertext, *Manfred* can be seen as a representation of Plato's philosopher's journey (*theoria*), as will be shown in Chapter One.

Aurelius, going on to establish a parallel between Wordsworth and Byron on the grounds of their shared stoicism, "an idealization of quiescence". See Michael G. Cooke, *The Romantic Will* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 207. Henceforth Cooke 1976. Still, Cooke indicates that the two poets "start from the opposite poles of gratuitous melancholy and Promethean defiance" (ibid). Interestingly, Cooke's discussion of "Prometheanism" tackles Byron's "Prometheus" and *CHP* III (ibid, pp. 38-41, 79, 217-220), while completely omitting *Manfred*. For an overview of Byron's stoicism, see M. G. Cooke, *The Blind Man Traces the Circle: On the Patterns and Philosophy of Byron's Poetry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1969), pp. 181-183, 203-285. Henceforth Cooke 1969.

²³ See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, transl. James Creed Meredith, ed. Nicholas Walker (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

²⁴ See Leslie Mitchell, "The Country", *The Whig World* (London and New York: Humbledon and London, 2005), pp. 59-76. Henceforth Mitchell. Sir Richard Payne Knight's ironical dismissal of Burke's *Reflections on the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757) espouses a literary approach to the Classical Greek text in order to expose what a patrician Whig Philhellene felt was a primitivistic appropriation (*quia* violation) of the Classical on the part of an Irish plebeian, attesting to the extent of identification on the part of the British ruling class with Classical tropes and their dissemination, and their disbelief in the Natural Sublime: "If [Burke] had walked up St James' Street without his breeches, it would have occasioned great and universal astonishment; and if he had, at the same time, carried a blunderbuss in his hands, the astonishment would have been mixed with no small portion of terror; but I do not believe that the united effects of these two powerful passions would have produced any sensation approaching the sublime" (Mitchell, p. 70).

b. The Oriental elements and the Roman assimilation of the Greek imaginary

Some of the contemporary reviewers of *Manfred* were mystified by the play's irreverence to Christianity and to Ancient myth alike. Thus Robert Wilson from the *British Critic* (July 1817):

The fire-worship of the Persians, the Nemesis of the Greeks, the fairy tales of our nursery, are brought into action, and what is worst of all, are combined with the appearance of Christianity. The least that can be said of this olla podrida is, that in taste it is execrable, its execution absurd.²⁵

On a closer look at the Greek mythology, conditioned by a close relationship with its Oriental (Persian) other, we are less in the dark than the contemporary reviewer. Greek religion and philosophy were deeply influenced by their Persian neighbours, from whom they imported the premises of Zoroastrianism, effectively formative of the teachings of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and attested in the records of Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny and Plutarch.²⁶ Hence, Byron's dualism and Zoroastrianism should be read within the context of his Classical legacy.

In order to assess the ways in which *Manfred* has been influenced by the Greek imaginary, it is necessary to identify its constituent parts, and their subsequent adaptation and appropriation on the part of Classical and Christian writers. Surely the landscape of *Manfred* cannot always be directly associated with the geography of the "Levant", which comprised the regions of Albania, Continental Greece and Asia Minor. However, it can be easily related to the cultural (literary) landscape of Ancient Greece, created by Ancient Greek and Roman writers, amongst whom Xenophon, Herodotus, Thucydides, Strabo, Livy and Pausanias were the most notable. This literary, imaginary landscape was subsequently surveyed by young British noblemen while on their Grand Tour across Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, the contemporary viewer's experience of actual landscape conditioned by the Whig notion of the British patrician legacy, which in return spanned the legislative borders of the Roman Empire and identified with its ruins and relics.

²⁵ n.a. [Robert Wilson], "Manfred, a Dramatic Poem. By Lord Byron", *British Critic*, 2nd Series, VII (July 1817), 38-47. Repr. *RR B I*, pp. 270-275 (p. 275).

²⁶ See Peter Kingsley, "The Greek Origin of the Sixth-Century Dating of Zoroaster", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 53 (1990), 245-265. Henceforth Kingsley.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Eastern Roman Empire, subsequently known as the Byzantine Empire, used Ancient Greek as its civic language until it was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century. Paradoxically, the Greeks of the Middle Ages called themselves, “the Romans” (*hoi Romaioi*) on the grounds of their Byzantine (Eastern Roman) heritage, while the North-Western Europeans appropriated Western Roman heritage, wherein Greek and Roman influences were fused.²⁷ Until the mid-eighteenth century, the records of Ancient Greek language and civilization survived by means of Latin and Arabic translations.²⁸ The ideals of the Enlightenment – power, sophistication, reason – had abundant echoes in contemporary perceptions of the Roman Empire. While the French kings propped the legacy of Roman emperors, the British Whigs saw themselves as heirs to Roman republicanism. A shift in the collective European consciousness towards the “purer”, primitivistic Greek states was anticipated by the French Revolution and Napoleon, who respectively appropriated the legacy of Roman Republic and Empire. In effect, British Philhellenism started after the American and French Revolutions, flourishing especially after Napoleon became the Emperor of France. At this time, William Mitford’s *History of Greece* (1784-1810) introduced a parallel between the Ancient Greek and contemporary British democracy, seeing the latter as the upgrade of the former.²⁹

²⁷ See John Buxton, “Greece in the Imagination of Byron and Shelley”, *The Byron Journal* 4 (1976), 76-89 (p. 80). Henceforth Buxton.

²⁸ Within the Renaissance revival of interest in secular “Classical” studies, based on Ancient rhetoric, philosophy and sculpture, Ancient Greece was tackled only *passim*, and on the grounds of Roman copies of its artefacts. However, Ancient Greek studies were taken up by sixteenth-century German (Biblical) scholars, who followed Luther’s insistence on understanding Christianity *sola scriptura*. Since the Greek version of the Bible was the oldest, Lutheran exegesis initiated Hellenism as a scholarly discipline. From then on, the Germans were the foremost in Greek scholarship (Morris, p. 16).

²⁹ According to Brendan A. Rapple, Mitford’s notion of democracy was essentially oligarchic and primitivistic in favouring the Homeric states and the Macedonian dynasty over the Athenian democratic model. See Brendan A. Rapple, “Ideology and history: William Mitford’s *History of Greece* (1784-1810)”, *Papers on Language and Literature* 37/4 (22 September 2001), 361-380. At the onset of British imperialism, contemporary histories of Greece extolled the political hegemonies of Sparta and Philip II of Macedon, legitimizing the hegemonic (Orientalist) attitudes of the Philhellenists. Anticipating Mitford, the Grecian histories of Temple Stanyan (1739) and Oliver Goldsmith (1774) were in unison in favouring the militaristic oligarchy of Sparta over the Athenian model of democracy. See Temple Stanyan, *Grecian History. From the Origin of Greece, to the Death of Philip of Macedon*. 2 vols (London: J. and R. Tonson, 1751), and Oliver Goldsmith, *The history of Greece: From the earliest state to the death of Alexander the Great: to which is added, a summary account of the affairs of Greece, from that period, to the sacking of Constantinople by the Othomans*, 2 vols in 1 (London: C. and J. Rivington, 1823). In showing how the Romans derived their excellence from Greece, the original of all imitations, Shelley’s *A Defence of Poetry* (1821) provides a good example of the reassessment of the origins of the patrician legacy. Thus Shelley: “The Romans appear to have considered the Greeks as the selectest treasures of the selectest forms of manners and of nature, and to have abstained from creating in measured language, sculpture, music, or architecture, anything which might bear a particular relation to their own condition, whilst it should bear a general one to the universal constitution of the world”. See Percy Bysshe Shelley,

Notably, Byron applied to Mitford throughout his life, commending Mitford's opinions regarding the state of the peoples on the Levant (*BLJ* I, 20-21), and glossing him in Canto XII of *Don Juan* (stanza xix) thus:

His great pleasure consists in praising tyrants, abusing Plutarch, spelling oddly, and writing quaintly; and what is strange, after all his is the best modern history of Greece in any language, and he is perhaps the best of modern historians whatsoever (*CPW* V, 753).³⁰

A shift from the Roman onto the much more disturbed and innerly complicated Ancient Greek culture was facilitated by the German art critic Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768) and his work *Die Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764), which established a difference between the Roman, the Graeco-Roman and the Greek on the grounds of Vatican sculptures, many of which were Roman copies of earlier Classical and Hellenistic Greek originals.³¹ Translated into English by Henry Fuseli (1768), Winckelmann's study was seminal for all European collectors of Hellenic relics during the eighteenth century, including Sir William Hamilton, Sir Richard Payne Knight, and the Dilettanti. As will be shown in the first two chapters, Byron was respectful of the Dilettanti since the days anticipating his Grand Tour, when he devoured their reports and editions from various Levantine expeditions. He met some of them in person - most notably, William Gell and Richard Payne Knight - during his years of fame. In addition, he took part in archeological expeditions pursued by various art collectors, architects and archaeologists of international renown, some of whom were German and all of whom espoused Winckelmann's approach. Owing to Winckelmann's reassessment of the legacy of Ancient ruins in favour of Greece as the predecessor of Rome, Greece could be seen as "the childhood of Europe", and Philhellenism replaced Neo-Classicist references to the Roman legacy. Notably, the Augustan age, which anticipated the Philhellenism of the second part of the eighteenth century, was Byron's preferred age in English literature.³² However, in his letter to Murray about Pope, Byron inevitably conditions his notion of Pope as *the* great British civilizer on the grounds of conservation and dissemination of the Greek imaginary. Notably, one of Pope's chief

"A Defence of Poetry", *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*, ed. Bruce Woodcock (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2002), pp. 635-660 (p. 647). Henceforth Woodcock.

³⁰ Byron used Mitford as a source when drafting *Sardanapalus* in Ravenna (*BLJ* VIII, pp. 13-15, 26).

³¹ In establishing four respective historical stages of Greek plastic art, Winckelmann applied the four-stage scheme used for Ancient Greek poetry established by the Renaissance scholar Scaliger (Morris, p. 16), who for his part appropriated Aristotle.

³² According to Jonathan Sachs, Byron's "*gradus ad Parnassum*" of the contemporary British poets is more inclined to Rome than to Greece. See Jonathan Sachs, *Romantic Antiquity: Rome in the British Imagination, 1789-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 126.

literary achievements was his translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into English, and in the era when Homer was considered uncouth and barbaric in comparison to Virgil. Thus Byron:

If your literature should become the learning of Mankind, divested of party cabals – temporary fashions – and national pride and prejudice – an Englishman anxious that the Posterity of Strangers should know that there had been such thing as a British Epic and Tragedy – might wish for the preservation of Shakespeare and Milton – but the surviving World would snatch Pope from the Wreck – and the rest sink with the People. – He is the moral poet of all Civilisation – and as such let us hope that he will one day be the National poet of Mankind (*CMP*, 150-151).³³

Byron's speculation that Britain might vanish, leaving only the English language to be studied on foreign shores, arguably evokes the vanished Ancient Greece rather than Rome, the early conqueror of Britain, since the civic and linguistic legacy of the latter was very much alive in Byron's time. Moreover, the above evoked party cabals, temporary fashions and national pride and prejudice suggest an additional parallel with contemporary Greece previously visited by Byron, divided between French, English, Turkish, Arnaout and the several Greek "party cabals" and victimized by Western-European "pride and prejudice", respectively regarding its Ancient democratic tradition and its contemporary inhabitants. Thus, Byron seems to reiterate Shelley's more explicit statement from *Hellas* in cryptically referring to the "Greekness" of civilized Englishmen, as well as to the essentially imaginary quality of Greekness.³⁴

c. The Greek imaginary and the Gothic

³³ Byron's notion of progressive corruption is essentially Greek, based on the Aristotelian notion of the respective Four Ages of man, marking his progressive corruption.

³⁴ Thus Shelley in *Hellas*: "But for Greece, Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages, and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess" (Reiman and Powers, p. 409). According to Maria Schoina and John Buxton, the crucial difference in Byron's and Shelley's Philhellenism lay in the fact that Shelley lacked the experience of a sojourn in contemporary "Oriental" Greece. See Maria Schoina, *Romantic Anglo-Italians: Configurations of Identity in Byron, the Shelleys, and in the Pisan Circle* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), p. 127. Henceforth Schoina. Also Buxton, p. 78. In accordance with Shelley's "imaginary Greek" Philhellenism, *Frankenstein's* Creature is taught to look down on Orientals while reading Volney, and to prefer Greek and Roman "democrats" (i.e. Solon, Lycurgus and Numa Pompilius) to Theseus and Romulus, who were kings. The study of Cecil Maurice Bowra espouses a view that Byron's attitude to (Greek) freedom was essentially realistic and optimistic, in contrast to that of Shelley, which was idealistic and imaginary. See C. M. Bowra, "Prometheus Unbound" and "Don Juan", *The Romantic Imagination* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 103-125, pp. 149-173.

After the rise of Cartesian consciousness, man no longer saw himself as central to the universe, which was an important contrast to the perspective espoused by Ancient man. While actively trying to revise the meaning of Classical tropes and figures in order to better suit the expanded epistemic concept, modern man still depended on their Ancient contexts. In effect, the “Classical” sometimes paradoxically referred to the established tradition and to its other. Just like his Greek predecessor, modern man yearned for the Real, suggested by, yet eminently absent from, the Classical frame of reference. In effect, the Real was sought within the realm of non-Classical. The otherness to the Classical provided the common ground for Orientalism, exoticism and Gothicism, all of which terms suggest Eastern, Asian, anti-Classical provenance.³⁵ This otherness *vis-à-vis* Classical regularity, proportion and reason was epitomized by the trope of mountains following the example of Longinus’ *On the Sublime* (paradoxically, a Classical primer). The rugged mountain landscape, the irregularity of which was disruptive to all canons of Classical beauty, was the main visual trope of “the Gothic”, which, in the second half of the eighteenth century, became the epitome of all anti-Classical contexts. According to Marilyn Butler, the period was marked by a *sui generis* “nostalgia” where “all the arts of Western nations refused to validate the contemporary social world”.³⁶ Within this nostalgia, the Greek imaginary was clearly distinguished from the Gothic. Thus Horace Walpole (1717-1797), the Whig MP and Philhellene who doubled as a Gothic author and architect: “One must have taste to be sensible to the

³⁵ Generally, the “anti-Classical” simultaneously signified the exhilarating emergence of a new way of thinking and a terrifying departure from the omnipresent Classical epistemology (e.g. Davison, pp. 45-50). Since the Goths hailed from Asia, the conflation of “Gothic” with “exotic” and “Oriental” is not random. The term “Gothic”, meaning “pertaining to the Goths”, was forged in the seventeenth century as a pejorative, denoting everything rugged, barbaric and uncouth. See *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832*, gen. ed. Iain McCalman (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 526. Henceforth McCalman. Literary Orientalism developed together with literary Gothicism, the two genres spawning novels departing from reason, proportion, the canonical and the expected. Orientalism in British literature started with the English translation of the French edition of *The Arabian Nights* (1704), with Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters* (1721), and with Samuel Johnson’s “Rasellas” (1759). Gothicism started with Richard Hurd’s *Letters of Chivalry and Romance* (1762), followed by Horace Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764) and Clara Reeve’s *Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (1777). Anticipating my argument, Gamer indicates that Walpole uses the attribute “Gothic” in the title of his novel in order to align himself with anti-Classical contexts (Gamer, p. 49). Moreover, Gamer points out that the term Gothic is posthumous, “coined in Britain after its referents had come to dominate the shelves of circulating libraries and the boards of the London stage (...) While its prestige eroded with its medieval connotations as the eighteenth century closed, “gothic” does not seem to have become a critical term denoting genre until two decades into the nineteenth century” (ibid, pp. 48-49). In effect, the term “Gothic” approximates to a consensual, imaginary compound, in a way transcending the historical limits of a certain literary epoch, thus providing a parallel to the concept of the Greek imaginary, discussed above.

³⁶ See Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 17. Henceforth Butler 1981.

beauties of Grecian architecture; one only wants passions to feel Gothic” (Butler 1981, 18). Byron, who in the Preface to *Marino Faliero* hailed Walpole’s Gothic tragedy *The Mysterious Mother* on the grounds of its (Neo-) Classical assets with regard to structure and its avoidance of sentimentality (CPW IV, 305), seems to espouse a similarly uneasy attitude to the Gothic. According to some critics, Byron’s *Manfred* was intertextual of Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*.³⁷ It is, however, more appropriate to affiliate Byron’s attitude to the Gothic (*quia* the irrational) with that of Joanna Baillie, espoused in *Plays on the Passions* (1798-1802), within which the irrational is eventually rationalized by being provided with an Enlightened solution (Gamer, 135).³⁸ Similarly, the hero of *Manfred* wins the day against the demons of death and his own fear by relying on his own “immortal” mind, namely on his invincible rationality, asserted in his dying hour: “The mind which is immortal makes itself / Requit for its good or evil thoughts – / Is its own origin of ill and end – / And its own place and time (III.iv: 129-132). Apparently, Manfred’s irrational fear of beholding the rotting corpse of his beloved, voiced in the previous act (II.ii: 198-205), offers a parallel with the Gothic, as do his Germanic name and the Swiss landscape. However, “the vision of Astarte’s corpse”, with which Manfred is finally presented in the final scene of Act II, is reiterated as, “the Phantom of” Astarte, thus intertextual of Plato’s notion of *phantasmata*, the visual antitypes by which the soul communicates with the body (e.g. *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus*). This reading of the Phantom of Astarte is coherent with Manfred’s subsequent mention of “the sought ‘Kalon,’ (sic) found, / And seated in my soul” (III.i: 13-14), announcing his final stage of enlightenment at the very beginning of Act III. As I will show in

³⁷ See Peter Cochran, “Byron reads and rewrites the Gothic”, *The Gothic Byron*, ed. Peter Cochran (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 1-78 (pp. 14-17). Henceforth Cochran 2009. Also Peter W. Graham, “From the Alps to Otranto”, Raizis 2000, p. 171. Also Samuel Clagget Chew, *The Dramas of Lord Byron. A Critical Study* (Vendenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915), p. 60. Henceforth Chew. Also Davison, p. 171.

³⁸ In his eminent study of the Byronic hero, Peter Thorslev draws a parallel between Byron’s *Manfred* and Joanna Baillie’s *De Montfort* (1801), noting that the hero of the latter play “has many of the characteristics of the typical Gothic villain”, matched by “many of the characteristics of the Man of Feeling”. See Peter L. Thorslev, *The Byronic hero: Types and Prototypes* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), pp. 58-61. Henceforth Thorslev. Byron was extremely reverential to Joanna Baillie, as shown in the three instances from his correspondence. On 6 September 1813 he wrote to Annabella Millbanke: “Nothing would do me more honour than the acquaintance of that Lady – who does not possess a more enthusiastic admirer than myself – she is our only dramatist since Otway & Southerne” (*BLJ* III, p. 109). On 23 April 1815, Byron wrote: “Women (saving Joanna Baillie) cannot write tragedy; they have not seen enough nor felt enough of life for it. I think Semiramis or Catherine II might have written (could they have been unqueened) a rare play” (*BLJ* IV, p. 290). On 2 April 1817, he wrote: “Voltaire was asked *why* no woman has ever written even a tolerable tragedy? [sic] ‘Ah (said the Patriarch) the composition of a tragedy requires *testicles*.’ If this be true, Lord knows what Joanna Baillie does; I suppose she borrows them” (*BLJ* V, p. 203).

subsequent chapters, this Platonic process of enlightenment dictates the progress of the play and holds the key to Manfred's ultimate intellectual superiority at the play's end. According to Peter Thorslev, the "Titanism" of Manfred is "at times inconsistent with the traditional Gothic setting and tone" (Thorslev, 168), which seems overruled by the "glorious rhetoric of the soliloquies, and in the high poetry of the choruses and lyrics" (ibid). Thus, Thorslev seems to hint at a tragic (Classical) intertext of the play, anticipating the argument of this thesis. As will be shown in Chapter Three, the "Gothic" trope allowed Byron and his friends to indulge in sceptical discussions, satirizing rather than fetishizing the supernatural.³⁹ However, Byron obviously did not want his play to be read, or to be staged, as Gothic. Thus, in a letter to Douglas Kinnaird (25 March 1817), Byron wrote:

I have no tragedy nor tragedies – but a sort of metaphysical drama which I sent to Murray the other day – which is the very Antipodes of the stage and is meant to be so – it is all in the Alps & the other world – and as mad as Bedlam (...) the persons are all magicians – ghosts - & the evil principle – with a mixed mythology of my own – which you may suppose is somewhat of the strangest (*BLJV*, 194-195).

The insights of Gleckner, McGann, Franklin and Davison into the strong Gothic undercurrent of *Manfred*, mentioned in the introductory section, seem corroborated by Byron's own apparent insight into *Manfred*'s possibly Gothic characteristics, on the grounds of which he rapidly revised his play, thus attesting to his unwillingness to allow it to be conflated with the Gothic contexts.⁴⁰ The invocation of Ashtaroath and

³⁹ In proof of my hypothesis of the mock-Gothic context of their conversations, Shelley's contribution to the Diodati "contest" consisted of facetious doggerel, which he never finished (Brewer, p. 37). Despite his assiduous tracing of a much earlier, Levantine provenance for *Manfred*, McGann infers that "the literary sources in *Manfred* seem directly or indirectly traceable to the visit of Lewis, whose influence was not confined to the oral translation of *Faust* but to the entire Gothic worlds which his presence called up for B[Byron]" (*CPW* IV, p. 465). In a letter to Samuel Rogers from Venice (4 April 1817) Byron did write that "last Autumn – I furnished Lewis with 'bread & salt' for some days at Diodati – in reward for which (besides his conversation) he translated Goethe's *Faust* to me by word of mouth" (*BLJV*, p. 206). However, what Byron mis-dates as "last Autumn" was actually the period of two weeks in August 1816, during which Byron and Lewis took trips to Madame de Staël in Copet, to Voltaire's property in Ferney, subsequently dining in the company of Polidori and Shelley in the Villa Diodati. According to Henry Buxton Forman, Lewis and Byron joked at the expense of Shelley, who "failed to detect that their assertion, that a man who believed in ghosts must also, surely, believe in God, was directed to his own professions of atheism". See Henry Buxton Forman, *Byron and Shelley: The History of a Friendship* (London: Melbourne /Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), p. 36. According to all the evidence provided in this study, the composition of *Manfred* started much earlier, and spanned a much longer period, than that of Lewis' visit.

⁴⁰ In the letter to Murray from 15 February 1816, mentioning the still-to-be-finished *Manfred* for the first time, Byron similarly states that he "rendered it quite impossible for the stage – for which my intercourse

subsequent indecent ditty in the aborted Act III (*CPW* IV, 468-469) certainly suggest a fragment of a Gothic melodrama. Also, the Abbot's flight to the Schreckhorn seems suggested by Lewis' *The Monk*, where the lecherous monk Ambrosio is dispensed with in a similar manner, following his long-term pact with the demon Lucifera, who transgenders the name of Lucifer in anticipation of the demon Ashtaroth, a transgendered Astarte.⁴¹ As I argue in this thesis, Byron seems to have realized that the mock-Gothic Act III reads (and may be staged) as a Gothic melodrama proper, a *sui generis* "*Faust the Third*", imitative rather than subversive of what he might have heard, or read, of Goethe's *Faust* I, or Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*. In effect, he quickly rewrote Act III and closeted *Manfred* by a series of disclaimers in his correspondence (*BLJ* V, 170, 185, 188, 194-195, 209, 239), so as to avoid all Gothic misconceptions.⁴² In the light of the above, my close reading of the play in Chapter Four does not take the discarded Act III into consideration as a constituent part of the finished play. According to Caroline Franklin, Byron adopts "a traditional Christian form, the Faustian morality play" only to subvert it by staging a "decadent aristocrat" who is "the embodiment of revolutionary energy" in refusing either to be saved or damned by an external force (Franklin, 78). In addition to being subversive of the Christian morality play, *Manfred* subverts the structural and spiritual laws of Greek tragedy. Apart from disregarding the three Aristotelian unities, *Manfred* does not caution the spectators *not* to strive above and beyond their limits, and to seek to adjust themselves to the justice administered by the Olympian gods, as does the Athenian tragedy, which had its roots in a religious ritual to the selfsame gods. Actually, *Manfred* does the very reverse. However, it is to some extent evocative of Plato's dialogues, which in return can be taken as the anticipators of mental theatre in staging the intellectual *theoria* of Socrates' pupils, facilitated by the maieutics of their master, in the mind of their reader. According to Steven E. Jones, Byron's reading dramas are "inherently theatrical", requiring "their

with [the Drury Lane] has given me the greatest contempt" (*BLJ* V, p. 170). This statement is reiterated in the letter to Murray from 9 March 1816 (*BLJ* V, p. 185).

⁴¹ See Matthew Gregory Lewis, *The Monk: A Romance, In two volumes* (Dublin: printed for the proprietors, 1800).

⁴² According to Davison, the Gothic is "an entertaining cautionary tale" which reveals the inefficiencies of the Enlightenment by its focus on "collapsing structures, malign enclosures, dark passions, and supernatural chaos" (Davison, p. 44). While *Manfred's* aborted Act III fits into that perspective, the play's revised Act III does not. Quite the contrary, *Manfred's* end, with the hero declaring his superiority to the threatening spirits, and his irreverence for the concept of posthumous rewards and punishments, follows in the line of the Enlightenment which, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, "aims at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters". See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, transl. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 1. Cf Davison, p. 45.

solitary reader to play the role of audience at a performance, based on previous experience with the stage and its convention, a translation of the theatrical over into the purely ‘literary’ experience”.⁴³ In Byron’s time, reading plays vied with stage plays in commercial viability while surpassing them in political influence and artistic prestige, since the reading audience was more affluent and respectful. Thus, Byron was none the worse for closeting *Manfred* in order to ensure his reader does not mistake its Classical intertext for that of contemporary (Gothic) melodrama.⁴⁴

Before continuing with the Greek intertext of *Manfred*, and with the play’s further dissemination of the Greek imaginary into the contemporary frame of reference, let us first observe another important motif in *Manfred* which, at a first reading, might seem “Gothic” and quite incoherent with the notion of the Greek imaginary, yet which can be shown as its constituent. As I argue in this thesis, the “Swiss” mountains in *Manfred* strongly rely on a set of Classical tropes and figures.

d. The Classical source of “Gothic” mountain tropes

The mountain scenery in *Manfred* is not always identifiable with that of the Levant. However, I argue that it is still “Greek” on the grounds of the Classical literary canon, on which the play draws. While the scenery described within the Gothic literary genre typically features Swiss or Italian mountains (most often evoked as “the Alps”), the “Gothic” conflation of high mountains with fear and uncertainty can be traced back to Classical writers.⁴⁵ Owing to the Classical tradition, mountain imagery was evoked by

⁴³ See Steven E. Jones, *Satire and Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), p. 171.

⁴⁴ In the letter to Murray from 15 February 1816, mentioning the still-to-be-finished *Manfred* for the first time, Byron states that he “rendered [*Manfred*] quite impossible for the stage – for which my intercourse with [the Drury Lane] has given me the greatest contempt” (*BLJ* V, p. 170). This statement is reiterated in the letter to Murray from 9 March 1816 (*BLJ* V, p. 185). For extensive information on the theatre in Byron’s time, see Gillian Russell, “Theatre”, McCalmán, pp. 223-231. Owing to the Stage Licensing Act (1737-1840), spoken drama was staged only in Covent Garden and Drury Lane, with all political allusions rigorously censored and excised (including the texts of Shakespeare’s plays). For an overview of Byron’s attitude to the contemporary British stage, and his hopes and initiatives with regard to its reformation, see David V. Erdman, “Byron’s Stage Fright”, Gleckner and Beatty, pp. 5-31.

⁴⁵ According to Margaret Nicolson, a descriptive style adopted from Graeco-Roman authors, as well as the names of Ancient Greek topography (i.e. Ossa, Parnasus, Olympus, Helicon, Ida, Pelion and Caucasus) functioned in place of, or in spite of, a real experience of mountain landscape in the case of numerous British authors, ranging from Shakespeare, Marvell, Donne, Vaughan, Bunyan, Milton, William Drummond, and many others, concluding with Shelley and Byron (Nicolson, pp. 7-71). Nicolson indicates that Byron’s childish memories of “Nature”, initially rhapsodised in “Lochin y Gair” or “When I roved A Young Highlander” and subsequently voiced in one of *Manfred*’s famous passages (II.ii: 144 ff) were attributed to a Western-European literary heritage familiar to every man of letters (Nicolson, p. 13).

“allegorization, abstraction and personification” (Nicolson, 50), overshadowing realism in favour of a series of conventional stereotypes throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the tradition of the Continental, or Grand Tour was established, British gentlemen similarly adhered to “a *pastiche* of the Classics” with regard to mountain landscape (ibid, 56).

In Ancient Greek mythology, the peaks of mountains were places where earth met heaven, and the habitat of the twelve Olympian gods, whose ways, mores and benevolence could not be predicted, or trusted. In effect, the distant and mistrustful attitude of the Ancient Greeks towards their gods seemed mirrored in their attitude to the mountains, which were viewed and sung from a distance, yet which were crossed only in direst necessity, when altars were built and offerings made to the inimical divinities of nature.⁴⁶ Even if they left a number of panoramic descriptions of landscape, with the mountain peaks looming in the distance, the Greek writers saw nature as nothing more than “the background to human life – a scenery to the play” (Hyde, 72). Plato’s Socrates states that he never left the city of Athens since he, who was fond of knowledge, could learn nothing from the trees and the country, but only from his fellow-citizens (*Phaedrus* 230 c-d). Aeschylus, for his part, presents Prometheus’ imprisonment on Caucasus, “far over Scythia’s pathless plains / Ne’er by foot of mortal trod” (*Prometheus Bound* 1-2) as the greatest punishment imaginable (Hyde, 72). Following Aeschylus’ cue, *Manfred* has the spiritual hierarchy of Earth meet on the summit of Mount Jungfrau, “on snows, where never human foot / Of common mortal trod” (II.iii: 2-3).

Despite having crossed and explored the Helvetian Alps in the interest of commerce and conquest, the Romans did not diverge from the Ancient Greek attitude, viewing the mountains either as the far end of a pastoral landscape or as the sites haunted by inimical spirits, or lesser gods (Hyde, 79-82). In Roman times, Pausanias described various sites in the Greek mountains in the context of an already absented Greek imaginary, namely as hotbeds of Ancient Greek civilization, hosting myths of nymphs and demigods, as well as the lore of vanished temples. Thus, mountains became the shrines to the absented Greek imaginary.⁴⁷ Byron, who travelled through

⁴⁶ See Walter Woodburn Hyde, “The Ancient Appreciation of Mountain Scenery”, *The Classical Journal* XI /2), (1915), pp. 70-85 (p. 74). Henceforth Hyde.

⁴⁷ According to a recent study by Jaš Elsner, the Pausanian approach to landscape influenced the subsequent theory of the picturesque espoused by Sir Richard Uvedale Price, who was Pausanias’ first English translator. See Jaš Elsner, “Introduction”, *Classical Receptions Journal*, 2.2 (2010), 157–173 (p.

Continental Greece with Pausanias in his hand, obviously imbibed Pausanias' approach to landscape and his attitude to the Greek mountains, as will be discussed in Chapter Two.

From the Classics, St Augustine of Hippo took mountain imagery as an allegory of moral states appropriate to God yet inappropriate to humans, who should be "low" and keep to valleys rather than transgressing by becoming "high" from pride and single-minded pursuit (Nicolson, 47).⁴⁸ Typically, the condemnation of mountains on the grounds of that they lack proportion either allegorically, where they were used as a symbol of misguided human presumption, or aesthetically, where they were seen as divulging from the norms of Classical proportion, resulted in a psychological mood challenging man's creative and cognitive process (Nicolson, 67). While the suggested mood might be espoused by Manfred, who effectively challenges the forces who rule over matter (i.e. inanimate nature), Byron saw nature as a set of Classical tropes, as shown within the following lines from *CHP* IV (stanzas lxxiii-lxxiv):

But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
Her never-trodden snow, and seen the hoar
Glaciers of bleak Mont-Blanc both far and near,
And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of fear,

Th' Acroceraunian mountains of old name
And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly
Like spirits of the spot, as 'twere for fame,
For still they soared unutterably high:
I've look'd on Ida with a Trojan's eye;
Athos, Olympus, Aetna, Atlas, made
These hills seem things of lesser dignity,
All, save the lone Soracte's height, displayed
Not *now* in snow, which asks the lyric Roman's aid
(654-666).

The Helvetian Alps are evoked in the same context as the mountains known in Ancient Greece, both of which are contained in the legislative context of the Roman Empire, still very much alive and contemporary in the patrician frame of reference. However,

159). In *An Essay on the Picturesque, As Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1794) Price offered the picturesque as an aesthetic category interposing between the Sublime and the Beautiful, created by the juxtaposition of "two opposite qualities of roughness and of sudden variation, joined to that of irregularity" (ibid). While departing from the Classicist theories of beauty in focusing on ruins, rugged nature and a subjective perspective, the picturesque still aimed for a pleasing effect. The picturesque appealed to painters and poets alike since it showcased their descriptive skills (McCalman, pp. 660, 646-647).

⁴⁸ Allegorizing in a similarly moral vein, Dante described the Mount of Purgatorio, where he meets a sinner named, Manfred, who beseeches him to deliver a message to his daughter. On a possible connexion between Dante's and Byron's Manfred, see Chew, p. 60.

Byron's distant form of awe regarding the "unutterably high" is Greek, and the fact is further corroborated by the reference to Roman civilization, by means of which the Greek imaginary has been safeguarded and preserved.⁴⁹

In a passage from *A Letter to John Murray, Esq^{re}* (1821), Byron posits a question as to whether "the *Art*"- the Columns – the temples –the wrecked vessel" or rather more "the spots themselves" contain "antique and modern poetry":

There are a thousand rocks and capes – far more picturesque than those of the Acropolis and Cape Sunium – in themselves, – what are they to a thousand Scenes in the wilder parts of Greece? of Asia Minor? Switzerland, – or even of Cintra in Portugal, or to many scenes of Italy – and the Sierras of Spain? – But it is the "*Art*" – the Columns – the temples – the wrecked vessel – which give them their antique and their modern poetry – and not the spots themselves. (...) I opposed – and will ever oppose – the robbery of ruins – from Athens to instruct the English in Sculpture (...) but why did I do so? –the *ruins* are as poetical in Piccadilly as they were in the Parthenon – but the Parthenon and its rock are less so without them. – – Such is the Poetry of Art (*CMP*, 133).

Thus Byron's own definition of the Greek imaginary, evoked as "the Poetry of Art": a complex, illusive and immaterial *je ne sais pas quois*, "the air of Greece" that made Byron, and so many other poets. As this thesis shows, Byron's Greek imaginary balanced Plato's writings with an actual, contemporary Greek landscape, with Hellenic and Oriental layers bedded on the same Ancient sites, and with factual nature surpassed, nay dwarfed in size and eminence, by linguistic Classical tropes. In the already cited letter to Murray from Venice (see above), Byron stated that "the germs of Manfred"

may be found in the Journal which I sent to Mrs Leigh (part of which you saw) when I went over first the Dent de Jamant & then the Wengeren [sic] or Wengeberg Alp & Scheideck and made the giro of the Jungfrau Schreckhorn &c.&c. shortly before I left Switzerland – I have the whole scene of Manfred before me as if it was but yesterday - & could point it out spot by spot, torrent and all (*BLJV*, 268).

Despite Byron's identification of *Manfred* with local Swiss scenery, his attitude to mountains was conditioned by Classical tropes, and that the selective landscape of the Swiss Alps was only a reminder of an earlier Greek landscape and all the myths, history and philosophies that he had digested up to that point, facilitated by his reading of Thomas Taylor and conversations with Shelley, as I will show in Chapter Three. In a

⁴⁹ Byron's above views regarding the Greek and Roman legacy of literary tropes and figures seems reiterated in Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry*. Despite crediting Lucretius, Virgil and Livy for creativity, Shelley reminds us that "Horace, Catullus, Ovid, and generally the other great writers of the Virgilian age, saw men and nature in the mirror of Greece" (Woodcock, p. 648). Even if "less poetical than those of Greece", Roman political (Republican) institutions were "the true poetry of Rome" (ibid).

letter to Murray, written a fortnight after “the reformed third Act” of *Manfred* had been dispatched to London (27 May 1817), Byron concedes that his landscape is *de facto* imaginary:

I can’t describe because my first impressions are always strong and confused – & my Memory *selects* & reduces them to order – like distance in the landscape – & blends them better – although they may be less distinct – (*BLJ* V, 221).

Thus, Byron’s creative input depended on his (Pausanias-indebted) process of selective displacement of an inner landscape, approximating to what I have called, the Greek imaginary, onto more recent sceneries.

Apart from Byron’s “Greek” landscape, the Greek imaginary in *Manfred* is inseparable from Plato’s notion of *eros* (love and desire), shown as the key to the *Kalon*, and the dualistic legacy of the Titan Prometheus. I shall discuss Byron’s approach to those two tropes throughout this thesis, before analyzing them closely within my reading of *Manfred* in Chapter Four. I have already introduced the importance of Platonic intertext within the play. Let us now observe the equally important intertext of Prometheus.

Prometheus in the Greek imaginary and in *Manfred*

The figure of Prometheus, closely associated with the nature and progress of man, is perhaps one of the most crucial segments of the Greek imaginary. Prometheus was a renegade from the race of Titans in siding with Zeus and helping him to gain absolute power. Soon afterwards, he quarrelled with Zeus, apparently championing humans as a means of opposing the former’s absolute power, until finally stealing the Olympian fire in order to help humans win the battle against mortality. In effect, Prometheus became a symbol of man’s restless intelligence, as well as of transgression.⁵⁰ In Christianity, early Modern thinkers (e.g. Boccaccio, Hobbes) took a hint from the Classics in reading

⁵⁰ See Anthony J. Podlecki, “Introduction”, *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2005), pp. 1-69 (p. 42). Henceforth Podlecki 2005. The most significant Ancient Greek records of Prometheus are left in the following works: Hesiod, *Theogony* 521-606, *Works and Days* 47-105; Plato, *Protagoras* 321 d 1 – 322 c 1-3; Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology* 1.7.2; n.a. [Hesiod?], *Catalogue of Women* 2, 4, 243; Aristophanes, *Birds* 1494-1552; Horace, *Odes* I.3: 25-33, I.16: 13-16. Anticipating Byron’s *Manfred*, who credits himself with the “Promethean spark” as well as with forbidden crime, Horace attributes the dualistic legacy of brilliance and self-destruction to Prometheus: “Rash in its total daring, the human race rushes to forbidden crime. Rash Prometheus brought fire to humans by evil theft. After fire had been brought down from the vault of heaven, wasting disease and a fresh battalion of fevers oppressed the earth, and death, previously delayed, came on inevitably and with quickened pace (I.3: 25-33). See Horace, *The Odes of Horace*, transl. Jeffrey H. Keimowitz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), p. 9. Henceforth *Odes*.

Prometheus' torture as the allegory of the agony that must be undergone by speculative minds striving to uncover the secrets of "nature", namely the universe (Podlecki 2005, 45, 46). On the mundane level, the contradictory Classical legacy of Prometheus found its way in popular morality stories and plays featuring a transgressive magus (e.g. Simon Magus, Alexander the Great, Johannes Faustus).⁵¹ In Greek myth, the dual legacy of Prometheus is complemented with that of Pandora, created by the Olympian gods as the embodiment of perfection yet sent to the Earth with a box full of mortal diseases targeting the human race, which she opened in ignorance after marrying Prometheus' brother. Thus, Pandora presents a parallel with the Biblical Eve, complementing Prometheus' parallel with Lucifer.⁵² In effect, poets of the Christian era chose to join the figure of a Promethean magus with a correlative of Pandora, namely his vision of a perfect woman. Thus Calderon de la Barca's *La estatua de Prometeo* (1674), Voltaire's *Pandore* (1740) and Goethe's four dramatic fragments (i.e. *Prometheus Firebringer*, *Prometheus*, *The Freeing of Prometheus*, *Pandora*), written within the span of thirty-five years (1773-1808) and anticipating *Faust* I (Podlecki 2005, 47-52). All of the above plays dramatize an inner restlessness of the Cartesian *cogito*, manifest in doubt, dissatisfaction and rebellion and effectively mediated by the intervention of an elusive female *Kalon*. Last but not least, Byron's *Manfred* reiterates the myth of Prometheus and Pandora by means of Manfred and Astarte, with the latter sharing in a transgressive, forbidden knowledge and posthumously representing the *Kalon*. In a parallel with Goethe, Byron appears to have taken time over the progressive course of his Byronic hero, whom McGann terms, "Promethean Isolato" (Soderholm, 290-291), until he finally created Manfred, the last in their line. According to Bernard Beatty, Prometheus, "a prototype artist as well as archetypal sufferer", is recognizable

⁵¹ As will be shown in Chapter Three, Byron deduced the figure of the transgressive magus from Prometheus. For the interrelatedness of the three respective figures, see Arnd Bohm, "Global Dominion: Faust and Alexander the Great", Fitzsimmons 2008, pp. 17-35 (p. 35). Also J. M. van den Laan, "The Enigmatic Eternal-Feminine", *Goethe's Faust and Cultural Memory: Compratist Interfaces*, ed. Lorna Fitzsimmons (USA: Lehigh University Press and The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2012), pp. 37-48 (p. 41). Henceforth Fitzsimmons 2012.

⁵² Owing to his interest in the Greek apocrypha, Byron was aware that the Greek myth of Prometheus was resonant and contemporary with Biblical accounts of the rebellious angels who invoked the wrath of God by teaching humans forbidden knowledge. In a parallel with the Greek myth of Prometheus, the Book of Enoch tells of the wrath of God invoked by the transgressive angel Azazel / Asael, who taught mortals the forbidden knowledge of finding and forging metals. In effect, God told the Archangel Raphael to bind the transgressor "hand and foot and cast him into darkness ... And lay jagged and sharp rocks beneath him; and cover him with darkness, and let him dwell there forever . . ." (Enoch 8: 1-3, 10. 4-6). Cf Podlecki 2005, p. 12. In Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus is similarly accredited for teaching humans how to use metals (500-503), and the play ends with his burial beneath the erupting Mount Caucasus.

in Byron's Harold, Manfred, Cain, Dante and Tasso.⁵³ In *Manfred*, Byron arguably presents what Beatty evokes in reference to Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, "a spectacle of suffering", in return conflated with what Kerenyi calls "the moral suffering fundamental to human existence" (ibid). As I will show in subsequent pages, Byron strongly resonated with the figure and myth of Prometheus, the love and admiration of whom was matched by his early love for and admiration of Napoleon.⁵⁴ Notably,

⁵³ See Bernard Beatty, "Fiction's Limit and Eden's Door", *Byron and the Limits of Fiction*, eds. Bernard Beatty and Vincent Newey (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), pp. 1-38 (p. 3). Henceforth Beatty 1988.

⁵⁴ For an extensive account of Byron's lifelong obsession with Napoleon, see John Clubbe, "Byron, Napoleon, and Imaginative Freedom" (Beatty 2008, pp. 181-192). According to Marilyn Butler, the heroes of Byron's *Oriental Tales* presented "fictional equivalents of Gericault's handsome idealized portrait of the French emperor on a white charger surmounting the Alps" (Butler 1981, p. 118). In the period anticipating his fall, Byron wrote a host of essentially pro-Napoleonic poems (i.e. *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, *Napoleon's Farewell*, *From the French*, and *On the Star of 'The Legion of Honour'*), where admiration is paradoxically mixed with reproach. In *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte* (1814), Byron's comparison of Napoleon and Prometheus shows his conflicted feelings toward the former:

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,
Wilt thou withstand the shock?
And share with him, the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock?
Foredoomed by God – by man accurst;
And that last act, though not thy worst,
The very Fiend's arch mock;
He in his fall preserv'd his pride,
And if a mortal, had as proudly died!
(136-144).

See George Gordon, Lord Byron, "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte", *CPW* III, pp. 259-265 (pp. 264-265). In the cancelled version of the stanza, the conclusive lines (140-144) focus more on Prometheus, who

suffered for kind acts to men,
Who have not seen his like again,
At least of kingly stock;
Since he was good, and thou but great,
Thou canst not quarrel with thy fate
(*CPW* III, pp. 264-265 n).

In *CHP* III, Byron compares Napoleon and his successor with the wolf and the lion (xix: 169-170), going on to address the French emperor as the contemporary Alexander, stating that "the part of Philip's son was thine" (xli: 366), and that he fell far short of the example of his predecessor. In *Manfred*, Byron has one of the Destinies prophesy that Napoleon will return from his exile on St. Helena, just as he had returned from Elba. He simultaneously censors his guilty desire by calling Napoleon, "the Captive Usurper" and "tyrant", guilty of spilling "the blood of a million", and of destroying an entire nation because of his own individual despair:

The Captive Usurper,
Hurl'd down from the throne,
Lay buried in torpor,
Forgotten and lone;
I broke down his slumbers,
I shivered his chain,
I leagued him with numbers –

Byron's initial conversations with Shelley seemed to have been facilitated by the latter's studies of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*.⁵⁵ With regard to political influence of the poet, Aeschylus could have served Byron and Shelley as a biographical and dramatic antitype. Living in a politically turbulent era when Athens was fighting her Greek rivals as well as the Persians (c 525/5 - 528/7 BC), Aeschylus had taken part in the battle of Marathon, and subsequently supported the democratic forces in Athens, respectively headed by Themistocles, Ephialtes and Pericles. According to Alan Sommerstein, Aeschylus' "progressive" political attitude resulted in the legendary incrimination of having divulged the secrets of the Eleusinian Mysteries, as was subsequently noted by a number of Classical writers.⁵⁶ Thus, Byron and Shelley could have established a biographical parallel between themselves and Aeschylus on the grounds of their Classical republicanism, as well as on the basis of their recent infamy, conflating moral "guilt" and political transgression.⁵⁷

He's Tyrant again!
 With the blood of a million he'll answer my care,
 With a nation's destruction – his flight and despair
 (II.iii: 16-25).

⁵⁵ During his stay in Geneva in 1816, Shelley studied Ancient Greek dramatists, especially Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*. According to Medwin, Shelley "translated this greatest of tragedies to Byron, a very indifferent Greek scholar, which produced his sublime ode on Prometheus..." (Medwin 1913, p. 161). As a number of recent scholars have shown, Medwin's assessment of Byron's knowledge of Greek was far from just.

⁵⁶ See Alan H. Sommerstein, *Aeschylean Tragedy* (Bari: Levante Editori, 1996), p. 26. Henceforth Sommerstein. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle himself cites Aeschylus as an example of an unconscious transgressor: "But of what he is doing a man might be ignorant, as for instance people say 'it slipped out of their mouths as they were speaking', or 'they did not know it was a secret' as Aeschylus said of the mysteries". See Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, transl. David Ross, rev. eds. J. L. Ackrill and J. O. Urmson (Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 51. A tongue-in-cheek reference to Aeschylus' transgression with regard to the Eleusinian Mysteries is given in Act II of Aristophanes' *Frogs*. See Aristophanes, *Frogs. The Wasps. The Poet and the Women. The Frogs*, transl. David Barrett (London: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 189. Allowing that some of the imagery in the *Oresteia* might have been derived from the Eleusinian Mysteries, Sommerstein indicates that Demeter, Eleusis and their mysteries are never mentioned in the trilogy, "and none of it could reasonably be regarded as illicit divulcation, since no non-initiate could even be aware of its connotations" (ibid, 25). Also see A. M. Bowie, "Religion and Politics in the Oresteia", *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Aeschylus*, ed. Michael Lloyd (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 323-358 (pp. 347-351).

⁵⁷ Again, *Manfred*'s anti-Aristotelian structure and (self-proclaimed) unstageability can be seen as modelled on Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, which falls down badly on the criteria of a proper tragedy as posited by Aristotle on the grounds of having no unity of action, and on the grounds of practically having no stage action since the hero literally does nothing, being bound to a rock, while the Chorus consists of immortal beings who are said to be moving by supernatural means (e.g. flying, being driven by large birds such as eagles and cranes, etc.), leaving us to speculate as to how those characters might have been represented in fifth-century Greece (Sommerstein, p. 301). However, if *Prometheus Bound* had been staged, it ought to have been the most scenically spectacular of all Greek tragedies (ibid, p. 309). Apart from their actions consisting mainly in speech, and their dramatis personae spanning a range of immaterial beings, including certain gods, *Manfred* and *Prometheus Bound* share a parallel in allowing for a possibility of a spectacular staging, which in return blunts the edge of their political subversiveness. In nineteenth-century Britain subsequent to Byron's death *Manfred* was understood to be, and effectively staged as, a spectacular Gothic melodrama with rich scenery, musical score, and featuring a ballet

Manfred can be seen as the prototype of Byron's subsequent dramatic works, in all of which the hero's life is presented as little else but agony sourced in the overall lack of freedom, with physical death offering the only means to liberation.⁵⁸ The cause of those heroes' afflicted existence is the patrician (Classical) tradition, conflated with the law of the father, in return enforced by the cosmic godhead.⁵⁹ In Byron's lyrical plots preceding *Manfred*, the figure of the hero's father has been conspicuously omitted from reference. Towards the end of Act III of *Manfred*, the hero's father is evoked by an old servant in a manner which seems innocuous, yet which is significant in retrospect. Count Sigismund, whom his son "nought resembles" (III.iii: 15), is further described in contrast to his son's ways and mores:

Count Sigismund was proud, - but gay and free, -
 A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not
 With books and solitude, nor made the night
 A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
 Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks
 And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside
 From men and their delights
 (III.iii: 19-25).

In being neither a warrior nor a reveller, and in following mysterious nightly pursuits, Manfred defies the customs of his rank, and of the human community which he is supposed to lead and provide with an example. Thus, he is not only a social loser, but a transgressor against the Lacanian law of the father. Driving themselves further and

(Taborski, pp. 202-229), apparently spurning all of Byron's previous intentions. Of those three stage productions (respectively of 1834, of 1863 and of 1873), the first and the second were smash-hits which immediately inspired two parodic burlesques, *Man-Fred* and *Mad Fred* (Taborski, p. 208). Also see Barry Weller, "Appendix: The Stage History of Byron's Plays", *CPW* VI, pp. 579-596 (pp. 589-592), and Franklin, pp. 61-87. In contrast to the British productions, the twentieth-century German and American productions of *Manfred* focused on staging the play as a form of oratory (Taborski, pp. 222-228, pp. 319-320), which is probably more akin to what Byron himself might have envisioned in regard to the eventual staging of his plays, since the dramatic form of oratory shifts the focus of the audience from physical action to words (namely, the ideas they convey). In addition, oratory can be seen as sourced in early Greek Thespian tragedy, predominant in the period shortly preceding Aeschylus, where a single actor exchanged lines with the chorus and its leader (Sommerstein, p. 14).

⁵⁸ In his correspondence, Byron derives his metaphysical plays, *Cain* and *Heaven and Earth*, from *Manfred* (*BLJ* VIII, pp. 36, 205, 206), and establishes a contextual parallel between *Manfred* and *Marino Faliero* by comparing both plays with Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, the former (in a tongue-in-cheek manner) in 1817 (*BLJ* V, p. 268) and the latter in 1821 (*BLJ* VIII, p. 67). He puts *The Two Foscari* and *Sardanapalus* in the same context as *Cain* by having the three plays published together in the same volume (*BLJ* VIII, p. 36), thus presenting them as three parts of the same contextual whole. Byron wanted to publish the "lyrical & Greek" *Heaven and Earth* either with *Cain*, or with *The Prophecy of Dante* (*BLJ* IX, p. 56), the latter poem reiterating the Promethean hero as epitomised by Manfred. McGann, for his part, establishes a parallel between the bitter knowledge of Manfred and the Doge Faliero in his analysis of the latter play (McGann 1968, p. 214).

⁵⁹ According to Jerome Christensen, aristocratic legacy presents the crux of the Byronic hero's guilt complex. See Jerome Christiansen, *Lord Byron's Strength: Romantic Writing and Commercial Society* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 10-19. Henceforth Christiansen.

further away from the law of the father, the social and the civilized, Manfred and Astarte each “rise / I knew not whither” (III.i: 107-108) by means of creating a self-sufficient bubble which provides them with an illusion of ultimate power.⁶⁰ On the other hand, the illusion effects a new reality. Even if their ultimate encapsulation comes at the cost of their physical life, they (re-)create the Real, as the play wants us to believe. Namely, the only thing Real, as Manfred asserts, is one’s immortal mind. As shown in the example of the Phantom of Astarte, the selfhood, the individual will, need not be lost with physical death, since the immortal mind still has the power of choice. The Phantom of Astarte is shown to be moved by the essence of her immortal mind rather than by the orders of Nemesis and Arimanes, who are the highest-positioned members of the Earth’s spiritual hierarchy, on the grounds of her disregard for their commands and her final decision to speak to Manfred, and to give him an answer for which he did *not* ask, in the form of a very specific prophecy. Apparently, Manfred and Astarte will themselves into an immaterial existence wherein they might be able to establish the rules for themselves. Thanks to the concept of the immortal mind, asserted in *Manfred*, the apparent outcasts and rebels are shown as having the edge over the more obedient members of human community. In effect, opting out of the law of the father is presented as a viable, indeed a preferable choice. Hence the timeless subversiveness of *Manfred*, a message to the civilization based on the law of the father and equally voided from the Real and the Greek imaginary. Along the progress of the play, and along with Manfred’s symbolic encounters with various voices, or spiritual entities, we are led toward a reassessment of the laws, ways and mores by which we have been taken for granted, which form part of our ancestral and contemporary referentiality, which might make us conditioned, typecast, less than free. Apparently, *Manfred* wants to be the modern man’s symbolic initiatory rite towards the reassessment of death which, as it is known, is the greatest threat offered to man under all political regimes. In presenting us with a way of defying the concept of death by wrenching the ultimate authority over one’s life and hereafter away from mortals and

⁶⁰ Notably, McGann calls *Manfred* “Byron’s most Nietzschean work” (McGann 1986, p. 1038). Manfred’s (and Astarte’s) wilful detachment from their temporal circumstances, employed as an empowering manoeuvre, effectively inspired Nietzsche’s concept of “desired forgetting”, seen as an essential means of transcending the present and a survival strategy. See Mark Sandy, “‘The Colossal Form’: Remodelling Memory, History, and Forgetting in Byron’s Poetic Recollections of Ruins”, *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* 51 (August 2008): 1-6. <<http://www.erudit.org/revue/ravon/2008/v/n51/01928ar.html>> [Accessed 13 January 2013]. Also see Cardwell II, pp. 266-268.

immortals alike, *Manfred* can be read as an ultimately political play.⁶¹ Thus, Byron's "poetry of politics", epitomized by his closet plays rather more than by his political activities, can be seen as starting with *Manfred*.

Conclusion

In basically going back to the immanent, mythical past within its frame of symbolic reference, *Manfred* can be seen as nostalgic and "reactionary", running against the grain of the new historicist thesis about the anti-Romantic Byron (Soderholm, 237) in espousing precisely the backward-looking nostalgia discussed by McGann in the context of Romantic ideology (ibid, 236-241). However, it can be argued that the play looks back into the immanent (i.e. the Greek imaginary) in order to tackle the issues of nameless guilt and a nameless curse, which have thus far plagued the Byronic hero. As this thesis shows, the British aristocratic legacy is conditioned on the Classical (Athenian) legacy. Thus, *Manfred* and its eponymous hero epitomize and expiate the guilt of the patrician, post-Classical legacy, with Manfred ostentatiously strung on its rack. After *Manfred*, the heretofore unspecified "mark of Cain" and the ensuing guilt will be sourced in the rotten patrician legacy, so narrowly constricted and elitist that it allows no other social movement apart from incest and the slaying of kin, as shown in Byron's Venetian plays.⁶² In return, this rotten dynamics is deduced from the law of the father, none other than Jehovah, in *Cain*. After *Manfred*, however, the heroes of Byron's (pseudo-)historical and metaphysical plays are shown as the perpetrators of factual guilty deeds against their kin and state, for which they are duly (self-)punished. Alternatively, the heroes of Byron's poetic narratives, Mazeppa, Beppo and Don Juan, continue on the track of the deflected Byronic hero as liberated, opportunistic roamers, all but free from the burden of family legacy, as well as from remorse for shedding the

⁶¹ According to Michael Simpson, the political action of Byron's plays consists of deferring the action onto the spectator, who effectively takes political action in the name of the hero represented on the stage. Thus, Byron (and Shelley) not only explore questions of political action within their dramatic plots, but also reconstruct, by reconvening, a radical audience that had been virtually eliminated in England during the period of the counterrevolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. See Michael Simpson, *Closet Performances: Political Exhibition and Prohibition in the Dramas of Byron and Shelley* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998). Peter Graham's recent study represents the opposite view, stating that Manfred and Byron are essentially apolitical, and that their freedom "from" choice makes sure not to specify any freedom "for" any constructive political option. According to Graham, Manfred's politics could be paraphrased by *Don Juan*'s narrator claiming that "being of 'no Party', he would 'offend all parties'" (ibid). See Peter Graham, "Byron's *Manfred*, Negativity and Freedom", Beatty 2008, pp. 50-59 (p. 56). For a similar argument on Manfred's "negative freedom", see Cooke 1969, p. 72. Also Barton, p. 109.

⁶² See McGann 1968, pp. 205-227. Also Jerome Christensen, "Marino Faliero and Byron's Satire", and Malcolm Kelsall, "Venice Preserved", Gleckner and Beatty, pp. 117-131 (p.125); pp. 33-67 (pp. 54-55).

imaginary blood of the beloved woman, whom they now simply leave behind (occasional retching and sighing notwithstanding).

Let us here begin our reassessment of *Manfred* in the light of Byron's Classical legacy by looking back toward his intellectual formation, conditioned on his thirteen-year-long drill in Ancient Greek and Latin.

**CHAPTER ONE: BYRON'S INTELLECTUAL AND
CLASSICAL FORMATION**

During the last two centuries, one important aspect of Byron's life as poet and latter-day fighter for freedom has been almost overlooked: the poet's Classical education.¹ Little account of this crucial aspect of Byron's intellectual formation appears in the assessments of his major biographers.² Yet the foundations of what I shall term, "Byron's Greek imaginary", began at an early age in his schooling in Aberdeen and, subsequently, at Harrow and Cambridge. Alongside this pattern of formal education we find an almost obsessive pursuit of knowledge of the Ancient historical and literary heritage of the Hellenic world and its successor, the Roman Empire. The pattern of reading and translation, accompanied by a voracious appetite for travelogues and accounts of excavated remains of the Ancient world formed the basics for Byron's list of desiderata as he prepared for his travels on his personal Grand Tour of the Eastern Mediterranean. This combination of formal education, private reading, and the indebtedness to the Whig tradition of Hell-Fire Clubs formed the necessary context for an embryonic vision of an Ancient Greece which was to become, over the two-year-sojourn in Greece, a specific mental construct, a powerful inner landscape which,

¹ In the last decades of the twentieth century, Byron's Classical studies and his proficiency in the Classics have been reassessed in the studies of E. J. Kegel-Brinkgreve and Kiriakoula Solomou. See E. J. Kegel Brinkgreve, "Byron and Horace", *English Studies* 57/2 (1976), 128-138, and Kiriakoula Solomou, "The Influence of Greek Poetry on Byron", *Byron Journal* 10 (1982), 4-19. The reassessment continued on the 14th International Byron Symposium held in Athens, 6-8 July 1987, with a number of papers arguing in favour of Byron's Classical proficiency. See Erwin A. Stürzl, "How Good Was Byron's Greek?"; Leslie A. Marchand, "The Development of Byron's Philhellenism"; Marius Byron Raizis, "Aspects of Byron's Philhellenism"; Francis Berry, "Byron and Greece: From Harrow to Missolonghi"; Giovanna Franci, "Byron's Pilgrimage Through Greece: Between Classical Ruins and Turkish Masquerade", *Lord Byron: Byronism – Liberalism – Philhellenism*, ed. M. Byron Raizis (Athens: The University of Athens, 1988), pp. 77-93; pp. 120-126; pp. 127-142; pp. 165-176. Henceforth Raizis 1988. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the conventional view of Byron as an indifferent Classicist has been mediated by the studies of Caroline Franklin and Andrew Nicholson. See Franklin, p. 21 and Andrew Nicholson, "'Nauseous Epigrams': Byron and Martial", *Romanticism* 13 (2007), 76-83.

² To name but the two most influential and researched examples. The biography of Leslie A. Marchand provides scant evidence of the nature of Byron's schooling and intellectual formation, putting a stress on Byron's less scholarly pursuits. Fiona MacCarthy, Byron's most recent major biographer, tells us nothing of the Classical curriculum in the Academy in Aberdeen and Harrow, not to mention Byron's private lessons in the Classics during his initial year in Newstead, Nottingham. In a chapter of forty-five pages we find the following comment, quite unrelated to what was being taught, rather on the relationship between the boys: "The ethos of boy worship at Harrow was encouraged by the classical studies that underpinned the curriculum, Byron and his contemporaries would have been familiar with heroic concepts of Greek love through their reading of Horace, Catullus, Virgil, Petronius: indeed in Byron's Cambridge circle the term 'Horatian' was used as a code word for homosexual. They were attuned to the ideal of *erômenos*, beautiful youths such as Ganymede or Hyacinth pursued by the Greek gods, and alerted by continual translation of the poets of the ancient world to the tempting image of the 'lightly-bounding boy', as he appears in Byron's post-Harrow translation of Anacreon, Ode 47". See Fiona MacCarthy, *Byron. Life and Legend* (London: John Murray, 2002), p. 39. Henceforth MacCarthy. Later on, however, MacCarthy quotes Byron as saying: "I know about as much as most school-boys after a Discipline of thirteen years" (*BLJ* V, p. 169) (MacCarthy, p. 41).

subsequently, in Switzerland and the company of Shelley, was to form the basis for the composition of *Manfred*.

In addition to the conventional view on Byron as a slipshod Classicist, which still persists, there is little insight into what actually stimulated Byron's passion for Greece and his desire that "Greece still might be free" (*Don Juan*, Canto III, line 704). Within my argument, the stimulus for his Greek action is a powerful intellectual trajectory which I term, "Byron's Greek imaginary", the sedimentation of which began at an early age in his schooling in Aberdeen and, subsequently, at Harrow and Cambridge. In addition to his gentlemanly Classics, Byron's Greek imaginary was conditioned on an inner landscape formed on the basis of the actual landscape of Ottoman Greece, wild and Oriental rather than civilized and "Classical". Partly based on pastoral (Classical) literary tropes and partly conditioned on his impressions of Oriental Greece, Byron's inner Greek landscape was formative of *CHP* I-II, *Oriental Tales* and *Manfred*, the earliest fragments of which indicate Levantine provenance, as has been mentioned in the Introduction.

In what follows I trace the formation of Byron's Greek imaginary from Aberdeen to the eve of the poet's departure from Falmouth, around 2 July 1809. In effect, this chapter hopes to provide extensive evidence of Byron's comprehensive Classical education, encompassing the philosophical and literary heritage of Classical writers as well as a fluency in Latin and Greek. If not immediately warming to the fixed rules of declinations, conjugations, irregular verbs and periodic sentences, Byron grew up in the shadow of their strictures, as well as in the company of Classical writers who influenced his views on politics, philosophy, religion, and poetic composition. As attested in his letters from his Grand Tour, he was conversant in Latin. From Lisbon (16 July 1809), he wrote to his Cambridge friend Francis Hodgson how he "talks bad Latin to the monks, who understand it, as it is like their own" (*BLJ* I, 215). On 11 August 1809 he wrote to his mother from Gibraltar how the monks of Mafra "understand Latin, so that we had a long conversation" (*ibid*, 219). Similarly, Byron's "basic" knowledge of Classical Greek grammar enabled him to learn Romaic Greek within a few months, whereupon he ironically accounted for this "miracle" by reminding his former schoolmaster, Dr Henry Drury, that the Classical and contemporary Greek are basically one and the same language (*ibid*, 238).

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In a letter to Robert Charles Dallas (21 January 1808) Byron stated: “Of the Classics I know as much as most Schoolboys after a Discipline of thirteen years” (*BLJ*, 148). Aged six, and within the same year in which he was taught to read and write, Byron began studying Latin in Aberdeen with a young Scotsman named Paterson, who was the son of his shoemaker (*BLJ* XIII, 107). He was taught from Thomas Ruddiman’s *Rudiments of Latin Tongue, or, a Plain and Easy Introduction to Latin Grammar* (1714) (*Life*, 6). Shortly before his seventh birthday, he was enrolled in Aberdeen Grammar School in Skene Street, one of the oldest schools in Britain (founded c 1250). According to Leslie A. Marchand, Latin was the only branch of study in Byron’s time, while even writing was considered an “extra” (Marchand I, 37).³ The dynamic of Byron’s later scholarly progress, relying on peer-pressure as an important stimulus, was conditioned in Aberdeen Grammar School. In the second form, Byron was only the twenty-eighth in rank amongst the thirty-eight of pupils. In order to spur his ambition, his schoolmaster made him exchange places with a much better pupil, quipping: “Now, George, man, let me see how soon you’ll be at the foot again” (*Life*, 7). By his fourth form (April 1798), Byron was the fifth in rank within the group of twenty-seven boys. He was an avid reader of travelogues, his special interest being Turkish and Roman history. This interest was to last through his lifetime. Before reaching the age of ten Byron had read Richard Knolles’ *Generall Historie of the Turks* (1603), Dimitrie Cantemir’s *History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire* (1734), the English translation of François De Tott’s *Memoirs of Baron de Tott, Containing the State of the Turkish Empire and the Crimea, During the Late War with Russia* (1786), the epistolary travelogues written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) during her journeys through Europe, Asia and Africa, amongst which *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (1763) were presumably Byron’s favourites. Also, Byron had by that time read Vincent Mignot’s *History of the Turkish, or Ottoman Empire, From its Foundation in 1300, to the Peace in Belgrade in 1740* (1787), translated into English by A. Hawkins (Marchand I, 38).

³ According to the school’s webpage, the curriculum was then based on “Greek, Latin and Ancient Geography”. See “Aberdeen Grammar School: AGS History”, <<http://grammar.org.uk/visitors/history/php>> [Accessed 22 January 2011].

DULWICH ACADEMY

After inheriting the title from his grand-uncle, Byron and his mother moved to Nottingham. On his own insistence that his education not be interrupted, he began reading Virgil and Cicero in the April of 1799 with a private tutor named Dummer Rogers (Marchand I, 52), who later told Moore that the young lord's knowledge of Latin was considerable for his age (*Life*, 14). In August 1799, on the initiative of his lawyer Hanson, Byron was put in the Dulwich-based "Academie" of Dr William Glennie. In contrast to the testimony of his affectionate Nottingham tutor, Byron now came to be considered deficient in Latin grammar. Hence, another lifetime pattern sprang into being as Byron befriended a much better young scholar than himself, named Lowes (Marchand I, 59). From then on, he would always seek tutelage from friends whom he deemed more proficient. The range of those brilliant scholars included John Peel and George Sinclair in Harrow and concluded with Percy Bysshe Shelley in Italy. Illustrating those early intellectual friendships in his later *Detached Thoughts* (1821) Byron remembered:

Peel the Orator and Statesman – ("that was – or is – or is to be") was my form-fellow – & we were both at the top of our remove – (A public School phrase) we were on good terms – but his brother was my intimate friend. – There were always great hopes of Peel – amongst us all, Masters & Scholars – and he has not disappointed them. . . . The prodigy of our School days – was George Sinclair (Son of Sir John) he made exercises for half the School (literally) verses at will – and themes without it (*BLJ IX*, 43).

HARROW

In April 1801, Byron entered Harrow, where he was placed in the fourth form on the grounds of his age. Again, he was deemed deficient in knowledge and skills, whereupon Dr Henry Drury took special care of his socialization and progress. After inspecting Byron's early copies of Xenophon and the Greek dramatists, Moore declared it "impossible, indeed, to look through the books which he had then in use, and which are scribbled over with clumsy interlined translations, without being struck with the narrow extent of his classical attainment" (*Life*, 29). However, Byron soon bounced back. As before in Aberdeen, his Classical proficiency grew proportionally with the progress of his social skills. Within two years, the isolated lame boy became adept at thrashing potential bullies, championing younger pupils and lavishing gifts on his peers. In effect,

the lower formers looked up to Byron, while the senior boys profited from his generosity, sometimes finishing off his translations from Latin in return. According to Byron's memories recorded in *Detached Thoughts*, the social dynamics of "fagging", epitomized by his friendship with George Sinclair, was a matter of course amongst Harrow boys (*BLJ* IX, 43). Christopher Tyerman's *A History of Harrow School* (2000) dedicates an entire chapter to Byron's Harrow, considering the period to be the school's heyday. According to Tyerman:

the ability in quoting the classics at will was a sign of breeding, the attribute of a gentleman, however loutish in other respects. Cocooned in this superiority, the internal structure of the school admitted no class distinction of wealth or blood, except for recognition in titles on the bill lists.⁴

Tyerman's claim that Classical education was a sign of class rather than intellect throws a new light on Byron's lifelong denial of having more than basic knowledge of Greek and Latin, suggesting that it might have been flaunted as an aristocratic distinction, namely as a distance from professional classes. Perhaps to this effect, Byron noted in *Detached Thoughts* how he was

remarked for the extent and readiness of my *general* information – but in all other respects idle – capable of great sudden exertions; (such as thirty or forty Greek Hexameters – of course with such prosody as it pleased God) but of few continuous drudgeries (*BLJ* IX, 42).

Tyerman's survey of Harrow's system of Classical studies leaves no room for doubt that boys were continuously drilled in classrooms as well as in their leisure time, since they were encouraged to embrace a reading of history and writing verse translations as their pastime activities. The time officially spent in classrooms consisted of five hours divided into four separate units on four days of the week, alternating with three hours on the two remaining days. Tuesday was a free day. In spite of the short time spent in school, many boys lived with private tutors, or in the lodgings supervised by their schoolmasters. In the three lower forms, boys expanded their basic Latin by reading Plato's *Phaedrus*, Ovid and Terence. In the fourth form, they started with Greek, reading Homer and the Greek New Testament. The Latin texts included Aesop, Caesar, Martial, Horace, Virgil, Cicero, Sallust, Tacitus, Livy, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides. According to Tyerman, Joseph Drury, the Head of School in Byron's time, "balanced Latin and Greek, concentrating on grammar and philology" (161) by narrowly focusing

⁴ Christopher Tyerman, "'A Glittering Scene': Joseph Drury and Byron's Harrow, 1785-1805", *A History of Harrow School* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 140-166 (p. 155).

on Virgil, Martial, Cicero, Sallust, Tacitus, Horace, Livy, Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides (119). Free verse translation, declaiming and acting, as well as history reading were the disciplines by the means of which Latin, and to a lesser extent Greek, were exercised and perfected. In the first instance, boys were encouraged to translate, or transpose, a Latin original into an English verse form. This innocuous form of public school drill facilitated Byron's intellectual development the most, as attested by his four subsequent volumes of transpositions from the Classics, published while in Cambridge.⁵ Many public men otherwise occupied in politics and business shared a taste for the "hours of idleness" spent in writing verses, keeping this activity apart from their official duties.

As a preparation for their prospective public lives, Harrow boys were coached in public declaiming, with extracts from classical texts being staged on the monthly basis. This practice was crowned by the so-called Speech Days, the three-day-competition amongst twelve chosen candidates. The Speech Days were open to the public as a means of catering to prospective clients, that is, rich boys' parents. The declaiming skills were ranked so high that classes were organized on the grounds of proficiency in declamation rather than according to age groups, and named after the classical writers whose texts were rehearsed. Byron's astounding ability to memorize texts upon a single reading or hearing was undeniably nurtured by his Harrow drill. Lastly, boys were encouraged to read Greek and Roman history, as they were prepared for lives in the public and political arena. Many amongst former Harrow pupils (e.g. Perceval, Goderich, Palmerston, Aberdeen, Althorp, *et al.*), including Byron's friend Peel, duly became Prime Ministers (Tyerman, 163). In effect, Byron's letter to his mother assuring her that "a way to riches to Greatness lies before me, I can, I will cut myself a path in the world or perish in the attempt" (*BLJ* I, 49) appears to have been influenced by Julius Caesar's motto, "*aut Caesar aut nihil*".⁶ Tyerman's claim that "half-baked

⁵ Of those juvenilia, *Fugitive Pieces* (1806) and *Poems on Various Occasions* (1807) were published privately and anonymously by the Newark publisher Ridge. Their revised edition, *Hours of Idleness* (1807), and its immediate revision, *Poems Original and Translated* (1809), were subsequently published by the same publisher under Byron's name.

⁶ The paradigm is used *verbatim* in the adult Byron's London Journal (*BLJ* III, p. 217), to be reiterated in *Marino Faliero*: "I will be what I should be, or be nothing" (II.i: 453). See George Gordon, Lord Byron, "Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice", *CPW* IV, pp. 298-446 (p. 350). Similarly, in *Manfred*, the eponymous hero tells of "those earthly visions / And noble aspirations of my youth"

(...) to rise
I know not whither – it might be to fall;
But fall, even as the mountain-cataract,

lesson in Greek and Roman history and political philosophy”, established by Drury’s predecessor, Dr Robert Sumner, were “an introduction into Whiggery” (Tyerman, 102), reiterate Malcolm Kelsall’s argument that, in order to understand Whig notion of “liberty” in the Regency context, one must turn to Plutarch and Polybius as much as to Thomas Paine.⁷ In Byron’s days, belonging to the Whig party and adhering to its set of cultural codes was a mark of British rank. The politics and manners of the Whigs flaunted the party’s diametrical opposition from Toryism. From the perspective of the Whigs, the Tories represented the burgeoning middle-class plebeians, absolutely loyal to the King and the Church of England, and afraid of sedition, or “Jacobinism”, which they in return associated (and sometimes confused) with the thoughts and ideas of Enlightened Deism and the French Revolution. In contrast to the Tories, the Whigs claimed that they sought to protect the autonomy of Parliament in respect to the King, according to the premises of the Glorious Revolution. In espousing what could be called, patrician democracy the Whigs saw themselves as heirs of the Ancient Roman republicanism from the era shortly preceding and concluding with Julius Caesar. According to Tyerman, the examples of the Macedonian kings, the Ptolemies and the Roman patrician democracy legitimated a “potentially combustible” sense of cultural elitism amongst senior pupils, who easily felt “slighted, ignored, or their perceived rights threatened” (ibid, 102).

Tyerman indicates that all Harrow schoolmasters from the period between 1750 and 1805 were liberal, if not negligent, with regard to religious education. While he was enthusiastic about the pedagogic uses of amateurish theatricals and declamatory lessons, Dr Drury rarely preached from the pulpit. Similarly, Drury’s predecessor and mentor, Dr Sumner, preferred the literary study of the Greek New Testament to traditional catechism.⁸ Inspired by Enlightened Deism as the prevalent teleological view of the eighteenth century, as well as by the recent shift from Roman to Greek

Which having leapt from its more dazzling height,
 Even in the foaming strength of its abyss
 (Which casts up misty columns that become
 Clouds raining from the re-ascended skies)
 Lies low but mighty still
 (III.i: 107-114).

⁷ See Malcolm Kelsall, *Byron’s Politics* (Brighton: Harvester Press / Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1987), p. 95.

⁸ As one of the six Harrow monitors, who possessed the keys to the library, Byron might have come across an apocryphal edition of the Greek Bible as a teenager in Harrow. This early reading would later facilitate his treatment of Biblical subject-matter as myth (e.g. *Cain, The Vision of Judgement, Heaven and Earth*).

Republicanism, the said “liberal, if not negligent” attitude of Byron’s teachers is noteworthy in the light of his later preference for Ancient Greek philosophy and the comparative approach to Greek and Hebrew myth before conventional Christianity. Notably, Byron wrote to Robert Charles Dallas on 21 January 1808:

I quitted Zeno for Aristippus, and conceive the Pleasure constitutes the ‘το Καλόν’. – In Morality I prefer Confucius to the ten Commandments, and Socrates to St. Paul (...) in Religion I favour the Catholic Emancipation but do not acknowledge the Pope, and I have refused to take the Sacrament because I do not think eating Bread or drinking wine from the hand of an earthly vicar, will make me an Inheritor of Heaven (*BLJ* I, 148).

In Plato’s dialogues, the sophist Zeno and the hedonist Aristippus are presented as departing from Socrates’ virtue, moving towards the opposite poles of Socratic virtue. Thus, Byron presents Socratic thought as paramount to his ethics. As if following Byron’s youthful letter, the Byronic heroes (e.g. the Giaour, Lara, Alp, Manfred) spurn Christianity and demonstrate a mystifying self-sufficiency, which can be deduced from a Classical (Socratic) pagan frame of reference. Especially Manfred, the last in line, can be seen as making good on the above passage.

In 1803, Byron received a copy of Alexander Pope’s poetical works from a banker’s son named Henry Boldero (Tyerman, 159). In effect, he developed a lifelong love and admiration for the Augustan poet’s work. Pope’s respective translations of Homer’s *Iliad* (1715-20) and *Odyssey* (1726) were the most famous, popular and financially successful contemporary editions of Homer, effecting an increased awareness of Homer’s verse in an age which had little taste for the vision of the warrior life described in the two epics. In order to make the ancient poem live for his Augustan contemporaries, Pope transposed Homer’s dactylic hexameters into heroic couplets, causing his translation to become a major English poem. Probably following Pope, Byron transposed two choral fragments of the Oceanides from Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Vincit* (Harrow, 1 December 1804) into two lyric stanzas:

Great Jove! to whose Almighty throne,
Both Gods and mortals homage pay,
Ne’er may my soul thy power disobey.
Oft shall the sacred victim fall,
In sea-girt Ocean’s mossy hall;
My voice shall rise no impious strain,
‘Gainst him who rules the sky and azure main.

[...]

How different now thy joyless fate
 Since first Hesione thy bride,
 When plac'd aloft in godlike state,
 The blushing beauty by thy side.
 Thou sat'st, while reverend Ocean smil'd,
 And mirthful strains the hours beguil'd,
 The Nymphs and Tritons danced around,
 Nor yet thy doom was fix'd, nor Jove relentless
 frown'd

(CPW I, 75-76).

In *Detached Thoughts*, Byron claimed that those stanzas were his first Harrow verses, and that they were “received by [Dr Drury] but coolly – – no one – had the least notion that I should subside into poesy” (*BLJ IX*, 43).⁹ Byron considered the two fragmentary translations of Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* to be his first mature lyrics, effectively including them in all four volumes of his juvenilia. Building on the context of Promethean struggle against the cosmic tyrant, Byron’s subsequent translation of Horace’s “Ode 3. Lib 3” (1806?), anticipates much of what will later be espoused in *Prometheus* and *Manfred*:

1.

The man of firm, and noble soul,
 No factious clamours can controul;
 No threat'ning tyrant's darkling brow,
 Can swerve him from his just intent;
 Gales the warring waves which plow,
 By Auster on the billows spent,
 To curb the Adriatic main,
 Would awe his fix'd determined mind in vain.

2.

Aye, and the red right arm of Jove,
 Hurling his lightnings from above,
 With all his terrors there unfurl'd,
 He would, unmov'd, unaw'd, behold;
 The flames of an expiring world,
 Again in crashing chaos roll'd
 In vast promiscuous ruin hurl'd,
 Might light his glorious funeral pile,
 Still dauntless midst the wreck of earth he'd smile

(CPW I, 155-156).

⁹ True to his interest in theatrics and public declamation, Drury, according to Byron, “had a great notion that I should turn out an Orator – from my fluency – my turbulence – my voice – my copiousness of declamation – and my action” (*BLJ IX*, p. 43).

Another of Byron's favourite transpositions from the Classics was *Adrian's Address To His Soul When Dying* (1806):

Ah! gentle, fleeting, wav'ring sprite!
Friend and associate of this clay!
To what unknown region borne,
Wilt thou, now, wing thy distant flight?
No more, with wonted humour gay,
But pallid, cheerless, and forlorn
(CPW I, 70).¹⁰

In spite of his personal preferences, Byron believed that his most successful translation from Latin was the episode of Nisus and Euryalus from Virgil's *Aeneid*, as he stated in a letter to Edward Noel Long (14 May 1807), written while he was preparing the third edition of his juvenile lyrics, *Hours of Idleness*.¹¹

I have lately been brushing up my *Intellects* by Translations from the Greek of Anacreon & Medea, of the former only 2 odes, & a Chorus from the Latter, will make their appearance, I am putting the last touches to a Translation of the Episode of Nisus & Euryalus, (in my opinion the best in point of Versification I have ever written) . . . (BLJ I, 118).

As the cited passage shows, Byron's poetic beginnings were inspired by the Greek and Latin epic and lyric traditions, so much so that he identified the very process of "Versification" (see above) with the imitation of various Classical sources. At this time, Byron was in his second year in Cambridge. However, he was still applying the skills taught in Harrow both as his pastime and his only serious academic activity.

CAMBRIDGE

The policy of two Universities was closely allied to that of the public schools in creating young gentlemen rather than scholars (Tyerman, 99). In effect, Byron wrote to

¹⁰ Apparently, the notion of soul as "sprite" is sourced in the Greek word *phantasma(ton)*, denoting the shadow of the departed and informing Plato's notion of *phantasmata* (e.g. *Timaeus* 71 a, *Phaedrus* 229 e – 230 a, *Theaetetus* 191 b – 196 c, *Sophist* 236 a-c, *Republic* 516 c-d) as shadows of spiritual reality available to mortal perception. This notion will be reiterated in *The Giaour* and *Manfred*, where the heroes' immaterial visions of the deceased Leila and Astarte will be called "shadow, or spirit", reiterated as "Phantom" (alias *phantasmaton*) of Astarte in *Manfred*.

¹¹ The reason why Byron singled out "The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus" as his best translation might be encrypted in the subtitle he chose for his translation: "A Paraphrase from the Aeneid lib. 9". The translated fragment is indeed a paraphrase of the original Latin text, a free-style translation (or transposition?) apparently following the manner of Pope's *Iliad*. Describing the bond of devotion between two young men, Virgil draws on conventions of erotic poetry yet extols the relationship between Nisus and Euryalus as *amor pius* rather than *paidērasteia*. Similarly, Byron's paraphrase evokes a pure and noble (albeit romantic) friendship rather than a liaison between two men. See George Gordon, Lord Byron, "The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus. A Paraphrase from the Aeneid lib. 9", CPW I, pp. 76-90.

his cousin Charles Gordon (4 August 1805) that he was to continue his “*Classical labours*” in Trinity College, Cambridge (*BLJ* I, 72). Once in Cambridge, Byron found mathematics and religious education ranked before Classical studies. At Harrow, mathematics used to be amongst the *mutatis mutandis* of the curriculum, preceded by writing, drawing, dancing, fencing and French (Tyerman, 168). In effect, Byron protested in letter to his tutor, Rev. Thomas Jones (14 February 1807) that

I certainly do not feel that the predilection for Mathematics, which may pervade the Inclinations of men destined for a clerical, or collegiate Life; if I had any “*penchant*” for the army they might be of service, as far as related to Tactics . . . (*BLJ* I, 108).

In addition, Byron found the contemporary standards of the Classical studies in Cambridge disappointing. His juvenile poem *Granta: A Medley* (1806) complains of “barbarous Latin” and of Greek taught from John Barlow Seale’s populist primer, *An Analysis of the Greek Metre* (1784). This knowledge was “unprofitable” even to the professional classes, who would be much better off studying geometry (*CPW* I, 98-102). *Thoughts Suggested by a College Examination* (1806) rephrases this complaint within an epigram:

Happy the youth! in Euclid’s axioms tried,
Though little vers’d in any art beside;
Who, scarcely skill’d an English line to pen,
Scans Attic metres, with a critic’s ken
(*CPW* I, 92).

In effect, Byron introduced his wish to “pass a couple of Years abroad, where I am certain of employing my Time to far more advantage and at much less expence (sic), than at our English Seminaries” in a letter to his mother from 26 February 1806, while still a freshman, since “improvement at an English University to a Man of Rank [was] impossible, and the very Idea *ridiculous*” (*BLJ* I, 89).

In the early nineteenth century, growing public interest in the broader context of the ancient world (i.e. art, philosophy, science, religion, general daily habits) was not met by Cambridge, where Classical studies adhered to the Renaissance-based canon appended by Richard Bentley (1662-1742) for Latin and Richard Porson (1759-1808) for Greek. Within Cambridge Classical studies, free English translation was considered obsolete. Still, textual criticism and emendation were the prerogatives of lecturers. Hence, the only option left to undergraduates was the study of syntax, accentuation and

grammar. The lecturers enforcing and perpetuating the limited and restrictive canon are described in *Thoughts Suggested by a College Examination* as

In manners rude, in foolish forms precise,
All modern arts, affecting to despise;
Yet prizing BENTLEY'S, BRUNCK'S, or PORSON'S note,
More than the verse, on which the critic wrote;
(*CPW* I, 93-94).

While Bentley was Pope's contemporary, Porson was Byron's.¹² Porson's critical editions included Xenophon's *Katabasis*, Pausanias and the Ancient Greek tragedians, especially Aeschylus and Euripides (i.e. *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, *Phoenissae* and *Medea*). Byron had an edition of Porson's Aeschylus in his confiscated library (*CMP*, 232, 235). In effect, he glossed Porson's name as "a man whose powers of mind and writings may, perhaps, justify their preference" (*CPW* I, 371). In a much later letter to Murray from Venice (20 February 1818), Byron remembered meeting Porson in the lodgings of his earliest Cambridge friend, William Bankes (*BLJ* VI, 12), as well as

in the Hall of our College – and at private parties – but not frequently – and I never can recollect him except as drunk or brutal and generally both (...) he used to recite - or rather vomit pages of all languages - & could hiccup Greek like a Helot - & certainly Sparta never shocked her children with grosser exhibition than this Man's intoxication (ibid).

The above passage attests to Byron's Whig Philhellenism, where "Greekness" is appropriated to suit the interests of the British patricians. In Ancient Greece, Helots were an ethnic minority in the area of Sparta who had no legal rights and were forced to work beneath the dignity of fully-fledged citizens. They were deliberately prevented from acquiring literacy, or fluency in Greek. In comparing Porson with a Helot, and in contrasting his rude manners with the polite "shocked" reaction of his students, Byron brings up the issue of class distinction between a professional scholar and the majority of his students from the aristocracy and upper classes.

i. Emblems of the Whig tradition

In the early eighteenth century, many young aristocrats dedicated a certain amount of time to travel across the lands that once spanned the Roman Empire (that is, Continental

¹² Pope satirized Bentley in the personae of various critics, e.g. in *Sober Advice from Horace* (1734) and *The Dunciad* (1743). See Paul Baines, "Richard Bentley", *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature*, ed. David Scott Castan, 5 vols (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), I, p. 173.

Europe and the Mediterranean, sometimes including Egypt and the Ottoman Empire). The time thus spent became known as the Grand Tour. By the end of the century, the Grand Tour was considered a *sui generis* intellectual completion amongst patricians, who usually produced travel journals which were subsequently published as travelogues (McCalman, 529). Amongst the most noted of all the gentlemen travellers were Sir Francis Dashwood, Baron le Despencer (1708-81), and John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718-92). With the aim to produce and harness the emblems of Whig culture, they established a series of “Hell-Fire Clubs”.

By founding the first Hell-Fire Club in 1720, the radical Whig Phillip James Wharton, 1st Duke of Wharton (1698-1731) established a twofold tradition for the later Whigs. Those were, respectively, rakishness and calculated blasphemy, employed as a means of political protest. Secondly, in founding the paper *True Briton* (1723-4), Wharton started the tradition of radical papers featuring anonymous satires, lampoons and political cartoons. In effect, rakishness as well as subversive publications depended on the gentlemen’s clubs for their *quasi*-cultic display and circulation.

Meeting at three different places, or even within three separate branches, the members of the Hell-Fire Clubs dressed as various Biblical figures, or saints, and played their roles for comic effect. They staged mock rituals making fun of Christian dogmas such as the Trinity. While leaving no evidence of orgies, Satanism or occult rituals, such organized displays of aristocratic scorn towards “Christianity” was targeted against the Church of England, which, in return, identified with the King. In effect, those mock-rituals were seen as seditious. Consequently, George I banned Wharton's Hell-Fire Club on the grounds of “immorality and profaneness” on 28 April 1721. Since then, a number of other Hell-Fire Clubs continued to ridicule conventional Christianity in various ritualistic ways, always based on an excessive partiality for women and wine.¹³

It is important to view Byron’s display of profligacy and the love for women and wine in the context of the British patrician tradition. In answer to a letter from Robert Charles Dallas, comparing Byron to Baron George Lyttelton (1708-1772), who was a friend and protector of Pope, Byron compared himself with Lyttelton’s libertine son Thomas, called, “the wicked Lord Lyttelton” (20 January 1808) (*BLJ* I, 146). He

¹³ See Geoffrey Ashe, *The Hell-Fire Clubs: A History of Anti-Morality* (Sutton Publishing Ltd, 2000), p. 49.

further confirmed the reference in the above cited letter to Dallas, written on the next day (21 January 1808), where he espouses Socratic and Epicurean (skeptical) philosophy in the place of Christian religion (see above), by calling himself “the wicked George Ld. B.” (*BLJ* I, 148). Thus, Byron ostensibly conflates the notion of Classical (pagan) skepticism and British libertinism within the concept of aristocratic legacy. Since the term libertinism sprang from Liber (alias Bacchus), the British libertine tradition developed its own form of an Ancient *symposium*, its exclusivity and secrecy being cultivated in gentlemen's clubs. One of Byron's early letters to Hobhouse (20 February 1808) suggests a parallel between the behaviour of the Cambridge Whig Club and that of their libertine ancestors:

Dear Hobhouse, - Upon my honour I do not recollect to have spoken of you and any friend of yours in the manner you state, and to the Club itself I am certain I never applied the epithets mentioned, or any terms of disrespect whatever. – As it is however possible I may have spoken of the very extraordinary state of intoxication in which I have seen you and another, not conceiving it to be a secret as never having been looked upon to make a part of the *mysteries* of the meeting, I cannot altogether deny the charge (. . .) Besides I do not exactly see, how your “sacrifice to the God of Wine“ as you classically term it, can possibly involve the interests or reputation of the Club, or by what sophistry my mention of such a circumstance can be tortured into an “*attack* on the society as a Body” (*BLJ* I, 160).

The conflation of the ritualistic “libertine” and political activity espoused by Hobhouse’s Cambridge club was most eminently anticipated by the eighteenth-century Dilettanti. Founded by Sir Francis Dashwood and Lord Sandwich in 1732, The Society of the Dilettanti started out as yet another Hell-Fire Club. All its initial members were young, well-born, well-acquainted with the Classical legacy of Italy and Greece, and politically ambitious. Faithful to the Hell-Fire Club tradition of provocative fancy-dressing, the early Dilettanti draped themselves in purple togas in imitation of Roman consuls. The society's documents were kept in a mahogany box called, the “Tomb of Bacchus”.¹⁴ The Dilettanti were innovative in their focus on the exploration of the Mediterranean legacy, as well as in introducing the Italian word *Dilettante* (approximating to the contemporary meaning of “the hedonist”) into English. Meeting

¹⁴ The J. Paul Getty Trust, “‘*Grecian Taste and Roman Spirit: The Society of Dilettanti*’: At the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Getty Villa (August 7 - October 28, 2008)” [Getty Communication Department Press Release], *The Getty*, <http://www.getty.edu/news/press/dilettanti/dilettanti_long_lead_revised.pdf>, 24 June 2008 [Accessed 13 April 2011], p. 3. Hereinafter Getty.

in taverns to discuss “those objects which had contributed to their entertainment abroad”, they elevated “convivial intercourse” to a high art (Getty, 2). Echoing Virgil and Horace, their drinking toasts and *bon mots* signalled the Society's priorities: “*Seria Ludo*” (serious matters in playful spirit), “*Res est Severa Voluptas*” (pleasure is a serious business) and “*Viva la Virtù*” (long live the fine arts) (ibid). Byron's levelling of pleasure and the Platonic *Kalon* in the above-cited letter to Dallas seems to echo the Dilettanti's patrician aestheticism, based on Ancient Greek tradition as presented in Plato's *Symposium*.

In sponsoring various expeditions to the Eastern Mediterranean, whose records were subsequently printed in lavish editions featuring maps and illustrations by eminent painters and architects, the Dilettanti encouraged the development of historiography and antiquarianism. In 1762, they commissioned the three-year sojourn of the painter James “Athenian” Stuart (1713-88) and the architect Nicholas Revett (1720-1804) in Athens (Getty, 2). Their collaboration produced a seminal three-volume edition called *Antiquities of Athens*, canonical for the Philhellenic architects and designers until well into the nineteenth century. They also financed Dr Richard Chandler's two-year excursion to Greece and Asia Minor, which produced three works, *Travels in Asia Minor* (1775), *Travels in Greece* (1776) and *History of Ilium* (1803) (ibid).

By the early nineteenth century, the membership of the Dilettanti had changed, academic scholars like Sir William Gell (1777-1836), exchanging places with gentlemen travellers and old-school libertines who had met in the earlier Hell-Fire clubs. The latter were best exemplified by Sir William Hamilton (1732-1803), who discovered the Isernian cult of Priapus, and Sir Richard Payne Knight (1750-1824), whose *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* (1786) argued that all art derived from religion, and all religion from fertility cults (Getty, 3). The new Dilettanti sponsored and promoted all sorts of Philhellenic causes and expeditions, the results of which were regularly published in the contemporary periodicals as well as in separate editions. In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, Byron suggests his familiarity with the publications sponsored by the Dilettanti, as well as with the work of Gell, stating: “Of Dardan tours let Dilettanti tell / I leave topography to rapid GELL” (*EBSR* 1033-1034). Apart from having befriended Gell upon his return from Greece in 1811 (*BLJ* III, 234), Byron socialized with Richard Payne Knight during his years of fame (*BLJ* III, 247, *BLJ* VI, 69).

During Byron's time in Cambridge, four subsequent editions of Byron's lyrics, at that stage "only" imitations and translations of Virgil, Catullus, Tibullus, Anacreon, Aeschylus and Euripides, were published. *Fugitive Pieces* (1806) and *Poems on Various Occasion* (1807) were published privately and anonymously by the Newark publisher Ridge. Their revised edition, entitled *Hours of Idleness* (1807) was printed as the work of "George Gordon, Lord Byron, a Minor".¹⁵

While Moore connects Byron's long absences from Cambridge with his penury (*Life*, 86), Marchand introduces his literary ambition as an additional reason. While in London, Byron was seeking the company of men about town and literary agents who would circulate and promote his lyrics, with a view to making *Hours of Idleness* sell better (Marchand I, 134-135). With regard to the quality of Byron's imitations and translations, critics were divided in opinion. The reviewers of *Le Beau Monde*, *The Critical Review* and *Anti-Jacobin Review* all mention the young author's aristocratic rank almost in the same breath with their commending his poetic "genius".¹⁶ While the Tory *Anti-Jacobin Review* extolled the young lord's "classical taste" (ibid), Henry Brougham's unsigned critique in the Whig *Edinburgh Review* disparaged Byron's skills at transposing the Classics into English.¹⁷ Byron's answer to Brougham was again based on Classical intertext, being a Juvenalian satire with a working title "British Bards", later changed into *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809-11).¹⁸ Ever since Brougham's review, Byron made sure that his subsequent transpositions of Classical writers were carefully proof-checked by a "committee" formed from amongst his new Cambridge friends, all of whom were solid Classicists and politically ambitious Whigs, and whose attachment to Byron appeared to grow progressively with his poetic reputation. Those friends were, respectively, William Bankes, Francis Hodgson, Charles Skinner Matthews, John Cam Hobhouse and Scrope Berdmore Davies. William Bankes (1786-1855), Byron's earliest Cambridge friend (e.g. *BLJ* VII, 230), later became a leading Egyptologist. Francis Hodgson (1781-1852), who was commended by

¹⁵ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Hours of Idleness: A Series of Poems, Original and Translated* (Newark: S. & J. Ridge, 1807).

¹⁶ See *The Anti-Jacobin Review* XXIII (December 1807), 407-408; *Le Beau Monde* II (September 1807), 88-90; *The Critical Review* (September 1807), 47-53; *Edinburgh Review* XI (January 1808), 285-289. Repr. *RR* B I, pp. 4-5, 75-78; *RR* B II, pp. 603-606, 833-835.

¹⁷ n. a. [Henry Brougham], "Hours of Idleness: A Series of Poems, Original and translated. By George Gordon, Lord Byron, a Minor. Newark, 1807", *Edinburgh Review* XI (January 1808), 285-289. Repr. *RR* B/II, pp. 833-835.

¹⁸ On the functions of Juvenalian satire in the context of Whig radicalism, as well as on the function of the British satire as a stylistic hybrid contemporary with British Romanticism, see Gary Dyer, *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

the *Edinburgh Review* for his translation of Juvenal (1807) (Marchand I, 141), effectively proofread *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, and continued to mentor Byron's Classical transpositions after the latter returned from his Grand Tour. According to the evidence in Byron's letters, Hodgson also collated *Hints from Horace* and *The Curse of Minerva* (see *BLJ* II, 112, 136), and probably his nine transpositions (i.e. eight imitations and one translation) from Martial (*CPW* III, 35-38). John Cam Hobhouse (1786-1869), the founder of the Cambridge Whig Club, and a subsequent radical Whig MP, was closest to Byron regarding literary ambition. In a letter to Ben Crosby, a London-based agent of his publisher Ridge (22 December 1807), Byron stated his wish that *British Bards* be published together with Hobhouse's imitation of Juvenal's Eleventh Satire (*BLJ* I, 141 n3). Scrope Berdmore Davies (1782-1852) was a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge who doubled as a Dandy and a gambler. After acting as Byron's guarantor on several occasions, he eventually provided Byron and Hobhouse with funds for their Grand Tour (Marchand I, 182).

On 14 March 1808, upon the expiry of Lord Grey de Ruthyn's lease of Newstead, Byron announced to Hobhouse that he hoped to "reestablish Medmenham Abbey, or some similar temple of Venus, of which I shall be Pontifex Maximus" in Newstead Abbey (*BLJ* I, 161). The reference made was to the most famous of the Hell-Fire Clubs, the Order of Friars of St Francis of Wycombe, who rented the twelfth-century Cistercian abbey in Medmenham for their meetings. Like the majority of the Hell-Fire Clubs, it was founded and presided over by Dashwood and Sandwich. Under the pretext of leisurely homosociability, the Medmenham "monks" orchestrated British Parliamentary affairs (c 1750-1770). Apart from hearsay, there are no records of the actual membership and the proceedings of the Medmenhamites. While there is a suggestion of some parody of monastic life and rituals, the Medmenham Abbey was officially in use as a country club. Benjamin Franklin and Horace Walpole were said to be amongst the occasional guests of the Medmenhamites, adding weight to the side of the society's respectability. The Hell-Fire "Friars" were much maligned by John Wilkes, who in a letter to Lord Grafton alluded to their alleged rites as "the English Eleusinian mysteries" where libations were poured to the "Bona Dea".¹⁹ According to John

¹⁹ See John Sainsbury, *John Wilkes: The Lives of A Libertine* (Ashgate Publishing, 2006), p. 109. According to Sainsbury, the nature of Dashwood's Hell-Fire enterprises is best expressed in a portrait by George Knapp (c 1742), where Dashwood is presented as the tonsured "SAN FRANCESCO DE VYCOMBO" raising a wine glass inscribed "MATRI SANCTORUM" to a statue of Venus (p. 204). On a later portrait

Sainsbury, the spirit of Dashwood's Medmenham was emblemized by Rabelais' Abbaye de Thélème, described in Chapter LVII of *Gargantua* (1534/5), the motto of which (i.e. "*Fay ce que voudras*") was gracing the Medmenham's entrance. As Rabelais asserted in *The Histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel*, "people who are free, well-born, well-bred, and easy in honest company have a natural spur and instinct which drives them to virtuous deeds; and this they call honour" (ibid). According to Moore, Byron and his *clique* were "not averse to convivial indulgences" (*Life*, 86). However, they were "too intellectual for mere vulgar debauchery" (ibid). In effect, Byron's version of a Hell-Fire Club was formed by a group of high-minded, politically ambitious young gentlemen who spent time "reading and improving conversation", as Matthews admitted to his sister in a letter from 22 May 1809 (*Life*, 82). According to Matthews' self-conscious description of their activities, their libertinism consisted in circulating a goblet made of skull filled with burgundy while dressed in monks' habits from the fancy dress shop. In consequence, they slept until the early afternoon, whereupon they read and discussed books until dinner. Their party was occasionally "increased by a presence of a neighbouring parson" (ibid), probably Byron's Southwell friend, John Becher. Byron later remembered that Matthews addressed him by no other name than "The Abbot" (*BLJ* VII, 231), probably in proof of the fact that Byron's *clique* deliberately chose Dashwood and the Medmenham Abbey as the means of entry into British patrician (*ergo* libertine) tradition. However, Byron's Newstead "monks" were probably more comparable to Plato's *Symposium* than to the Medmenhamites, who by and large included experienced and ruthless middle-aged MPs cleverly carrying out Parliamentary intrigues behind a smokescreen of hedonistic homosociability.

Apart from espousing Whig politics and wearing mock-habits, the most relevant parallel between the Hell-Fire "Friars" and the Newstead Abbey "monks" consisted in poetic exercise. The Medmenhamites left the compilation of poetry in manuscript form entitled, *Eros in monachium, or, the Medmenham garland* (Sainsbury, 107). Byron's *Lines Inscribed upon a Cup Formed From a Skull* (1808) suggest a transposition of the libertine cult to a more mystical version.²⁰ Divested of the carnal associations dear to

(c 1750), Dashwood is again "St Francis", this time gazing fondly at the statuette of a naked Venus, while the gleeful face of the Earl of Sandwich is seen in the background, reflected in Dashwood's halo (ibid).

²⁰ In a note appended to Byron's *Lines Inscribed upon a Cup Formed From a Skull*, Moore argues that Byron's much-commented quaffing of wine out of a monk's skull were inspired by Thomas Dekker's play *Wonder of a Kingdom*. See George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Works of Lord Byron, The Works of Lord Byron: with his Letters and Journals, and his Life*, ed. Thomas Moore, 17 vols (London: John Murray, 1833), VII, p. 217 n1. Henceforth *Works* I-XVII.

the elder Hell-Fire “Friars” and closer to the conversations informing a *symposion* described in Plato and Plutarch, these lines preamble Byron’s subsequent attitude to ruins and immortality, espoused in his major works:

Start not! – nor deem my spirit fled:
In me behold the only skull,
From which, unlike the living head,
Whatever flows is never dull.

[...]

Quaff while thou canst - another race,
When thou and thine like me are sped,
May rescue thee from earth's embrace,
And rhyme and revel with the dead.

Why not? since through life's little day
Our heads such sad effects produce;
Redeemed from worms and wasting clay,
This chance is theirs to be of use
(*CPW* I, 223-224).

Memento mori is an important trope of Byron’s poetry, especially in the context of his subsequent attitude to Classical legacy. As Richard Cronin indicates, ruined temples of Ancient Greece function as “an emblem of the mortality of the temple of reason, the human skull” in Byron’s *CHP* I-II:²¹

Look on its broken arch, its ruin’d wall,
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul:
Yes, this was once Ambition’s airy hall,
The dome of Thought, the palace of the Soul:
Behold through each lack-lustre, eyeless hole,
The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit
And Passion’s host, that never brook’d control:
Can all, saint, sage, or sophist ever writ,
People this lonely tower, this tenement refit?
(*CHP* II: vi).

According to Herodotus, drinking from skulls was customary amongst the barbaric Scythians (*History* IV: 65-66). Symbolically, a drinking vessel made of a skull suggests a wish for otherworldly communion, normally sanctioned as sacrilege on the grounds of a “forbidden knowledge” regarding to the secrets of life and death.²² In giving a voice

²¹ See Richard Cronin, *The Politics of Romantic Poetry: In Search of the Pure Commonwealth* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 137.

²² Highly superstitious Ancient Greeks would have been afraid of incurring the implacable wrath of Hades by messing with the remains of the dead, lest they should haunt them, as attested in the works of

and a sceptical consciousness to a deceased Christian monk's skull, Byron is transgressing against conventional Christianity in the manner which anticipates *Manfred*, where the hero admits to have drawn "from wither'd bones, and skulls, and heap'd up dust, / Conclusions most forbidden" (II.ii: 82-83), the secret of life and death, which apparently fascinated young Byron as much as his subsequent Byronic hero. In a parallel with the "voice" of the skull, *Manfred* reiterates a dislike of "earth's embrace", namely life (I.ii: 7-9), yet suggests that death might not be the end of human consciousness by showing the Phantom of Astarte in possession of an apparently immortal and inviolable free will. In having the "voice" of the deceased monk espouse the advantages of a bodiless spirit over the mentally dull "living dead", Byron's juvenile lyric anticipates *Manfred*, where the hero bemoans his physical existence as "my own soul's sepulchre" (I.ii: 27). As McGann notes, some of *Manfred*'s lines might have been written as early as in those merry days in Newstead 1808, while Byron was collecting funds for his Grand Tour from various sources. According to McGann's research, mentioned in the Introduction, the oldest fragment of *Manfred*, "written on the small sheet of very different paper" watermarked 1808 (*CPW* IV, 464), was "Ashtaroth's Song", intended for the subsequently discarded Act III. Ashtaroth's lines are concluded by the following ditty:

A prodigal son - and a maid undone -
 And a widow re-wedded within the year -
 And a worldly Monk - and a pregnant Nun -
 Are things which every day appear
 (*CPW* IV, 469).

Within the context of McGann's dating, "a worldly Monk" might have been Byron wearing a fancy costume of a monk, while "a maid undone" might have been a Newstead maidservant named Lucy, whom he impregnated at the time (Marchand I, 165).

In *CHP* I: vii, Childe Harold evokes his ancestral home as a "Monastic dome! condemn'd to uses vile! / Where Superstition once had made her den" (59-60). The said "Superstition" is effectively purged by lecherous monks who bring in "Paphian girls" (61), again suggesting a reference to an ancient tradition: "And monks might deem their time was come agen, / If ancient tales say true, nor wrong these holy men" (62-63).

Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Pausanias, *et al.* Byron was well informed on Ancient Greek superstition regarding the dead (as well as on its contemporary dissemination), as attested by his notes to *The Giaour* (*CPW* III, pp. 420-422).

Apart from the above-evoked libertine tradition espoused by the legendary Medmenhamites, the vile uses of the monastic dome seem referential of yet another “wicked Lord”, additionally suggested by Byron’s *quasi*-libertine “wicked George” reference (see above). Byron’s great-uncle and predecessor William Byron, 5th Baron of Rochdale (1722-1794) was widely known as “the wicked Lord” on the grounds of his bizarre infamy, anticipated by years of political eminence. William Byron used to be an influential Freemason, the Grand Master of the Premier Grand Lodge of England, holding the office for five respective years (1747-1752), surpassed in the length of his term only by the Prince of Wales, who was the Grand Master of England from 1792 until 1812. His friends included Horace Walpole, and his interests included connoisseurship of art and antiquarianism (Marchand I, 7) similar to that espoused by the Dilettanti, under whose influence he built a miniature “Folly Castle” in which to receive his libertine friends. In 1765, William Byron murdered his cousin and nearest neighbour William Chaworth in a drunken brawl provoked by a mysterious reason. He was accused of manslaughter and charged by a nominal fine, probably in consequence of his political connections. However, he was subsequently banned from public life, his reputation irreparably tarnished, and his mental health soon verging on madness, thus giving rise to numerous anecdotes of his savage treatment of his wife and servants (Marchand I, 9). He from then on kept to his Newstead estate, living off its game and timber and allegedly seeking to incur an even greater financial burden on his son and heir, since the latter eloped with his penurious first cousin, Juliana Elizabeth Byron, instead of marrying a heiress according to his father’s wishes (ibid). The “Wicked Lord” outlived his son and grandson, whereupon the financial bane of the entailed Newstead estate was inherited by young George Gordon. According to Moore, the anecdotes of his vicious ancestor captured Byron’s imagination, providing “the first dark outline of his ideal character, which he afterwards embodied in so many different shapes” (*Life*, 14). Anticipating the lifelong habit of his grand-nephew, William Byron kept various weapons at his bedside (ibid, 9). Also, he always dined alone, attended by his old manservant, who later remembered one of the Fifth Lord’s bizarre rituals:

for some years one and the same Bottle of claret was kept by me by his Lordship’s order the cork drawn and when the cloth was removed his Lordship cried aloud, “Joe, put the claret on the table” ... The Claret was daily removed ... and reappeared on each successive day but never touched (Marchand I, 10).

In the context of his previous man/kinslaughter, complemented by the lore of family incest, William Byron's strange attitude to wine seems to suggest Manfred's reaction to the cup of wine offered by the Chamois Hunter:

Away, away! There's blood upon the brim!
Will it then never – never sink in the earth?
(...) I say 'tis blood – my blood! the pure warm
stream
Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And love each other as we should not love,
And this was shed: but still it rises up,
Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven,
Where thou art not – and I shall never be
(*Manfred* II.i: 21-22 ... 24-30).

The imaginary William Byron, whom Byron never met in person yet whose “sins” (i.e. the legacy of ruined estates and a tarnished name) he inherited could have anticipated Manfred, a “man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin” (II.i: 31). Jerome Christensen describes the nameless guilt of the Byronic hero as

the zone where the general, such as familial past, the *zeitgeist*, or poetic tradition, meshes with the particular. By making the hero impossibly responsible for a past that can be neither spoken nor remembered, the nameless guilt catalyzes an impressive assertion of force that appears at once completely spontaneous and utterly destined (Christensen, 16).

The tradition of transgression is thus conflated with patrician (*ergo* Classical) tradition on a more personal level, and not just in the context of class libertinism. As a poet, Byron strives to fall out of the twisted law of the father by portraying one renegade after another, all of them incongruent with their respective surroundings, ideologies and political systems. This incogruence is accompanied by a restlessness called, “the mark of Cain”, apparently branding a man trying to escape his morally rotten roots. Since Byron inherited Newstead Abbey at about the same time that he was devouring Orientalist literature, he combined the legends of his ancestral infamy with his contemporary Orientalist reading. Thus, in Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*, he found “The History of Apheridon and Astarte” (Letter 67), providing an associative parallel with Byron's own incestuous relatives, and with the hinted incestuous transgression of Manfred and Astarte.²³ The above-evoked “superstition” associated with Harold's

²³ See Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Baron de Secondat, “Letter LXVII”, *Persian Letters*, transl. C. J. Betts (Penguin Books, 1977), pp. 136-143. The names Apheridon and Astarte are obviously Greek, reminding of the long Hellenistic rule over Central Asia, where their story takes place. Obviously, Montesquieu's Oriental fiction was indebted to the same Classical sources available to Byron in Harrow.

ancestral home obviously refers to Freemasonry, the rites of which are contrasted with the jovial ways of the “monks” (real or masked). According to his satiric reference in *Don Juan* XIII (stanza xxiv), Byron associated Freemasonry with political mobility:

And thus acquaintance grew, at noble routs,
And diplomatic dinners, or at other –
For Juan stood well with Ins and Outs,
As in Freemasonry a higher brother
(185-188).²⁴

In the following Canto XIV (stanzas xxi-xxii), Byron seems to conflate Freemasonry with the rites of Eleusinian Mysteries, suggesting an uneasy familiarity with both.²⁵ Referring to “the real portrait of the highest tribe”, Byron simultaneously affiliates with and assumes a distance from them:

(...) and besides, I wish to spare 'em,
For reasons which I choose to keep apart.
'Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgaret' –
Which means, that vulgar people must not share it.

And therefore what I throw off is ideal –
Lower'd, leaven'd, like a history of Freemasons;
Which bears the same relation to the real,
As Captain Parry's voyage may do to Jason's.
The grand Arcanum's not for men to see all;
My music has some mystic diapasons;
And there is much which could not be appreciated
In any manner by the uninitiated
(165-176).

²⁴ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “Don Juan”, *CPW* V, p. 531. The historic parallels between Freemasonry and British Whigs are many. Philip Wharton was the Freemasonic Grand Master of England (1722/3), the time of his function nearly overlapping with the foundation of his first Hell-Fire Club (1720). In spite of the fact that Wharton soon fell out with the Freemasons, they were from then on associated and often confused with the activity of all Hell-Fire clubs. In what seems to be a striking sequel, the Fourth Earl of Sandwich was the Freemasonic Grand Master in the same year in which he co-established the Society of the Dilettanti (1732). According to McCalman, many of the Freemasons “espoused Enlightenment universalism, committed themselves to moral and political regeneration, and dabbled in mystical metaphysical traditions derived from Renaissance neo-Platonism” (McCalman, p. 519). However, Sainsbury indicates that the British Freemasons “diverged from the cosmopolitanism and enlightened freethinking” of the time (p. 220), in a parallel with their Continental (mainly French) counterparts, in being conservative rather than revolutionary. Owing to Abbé Baruel's *History of Jacobinism*, translated into English in 1798, Freemasonry became conflated with the French Revolution and Jacobinism (McCalman, p. 513), whereupon it became a Gothic trope [e.g. Godwin's *St Leon* (1799), Shelley's *Zastrozzi* (1810) Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806)]. On the perceived connection between the Gothic fiction and Jacobinism, see Ellen Brinks, *Gothic Masculinity: Effeminacy and the Supernatural in English and German Romanticism* (London: Associated University Presses, Bucknell University Press, 2003), pp. 19-20. Henceforth Brinks. Also Gamer, pp. 74-75.

²⁵ Fiona MacCarthy indicates that the organization of the Italian Carbonari, whom Byron joined and supported in Ravenna, was similar to the organization of the Masonic Lodges (MacCarthy, p. 385).

In these lines, Byron uses a quotation from Horace referring to the mother-goddess Ceres, the patron of the Eleusinian mysteries. Freemasonic rites and symbols notably borrowed and revised the ancient symbols of the pre-Olympian cults which flourished on the area of Ancient Greece and Egypt. Typically, those mystery cults were of prehistoric origins, derived from agrarian cults based around the life cycle of crops, from fertility rites, and from the worship of the sun and the moon. All of them evoked some form of reconnection with the divine mother, and involved a form of symbolic or ritualistic death, enabling subsequent transformation. Unlike the official religions, where the outward allegiance to the local state god(s) is publicly shown, all mysteries typically emphasize an inwardness and privacy of worship within closed groups, where each member focuses on their personal salvation.

ii. The Eleusinian Mysteries

Owing to their broad span of literary reference disseminated by Ancient Greek and Roman writers, the Eleusinian Mysteries were probably the best known, as well as the most influential, of all Mediterranean mystery cults. As evident in the above lines from *Don Juan*, Byron was thoroughly familiar with the Ancient and contemporary codes of the Eleusinian Mysteries, making a distinction between the contemporary notion of the rites and that privy to their elder, Ancient Greek versions. The Eleusinian Mysteries were said to have sprung up in the eighth century BC amongst the pre-Homeric Thracians who preceded the Dorian settlers. They were finally prohibited by the Emperor Valentinian in 364 AD, soon after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. However, their function and pertaining rites were by and large adopted and appropriated within the Christian Mass and ritualistic pilgrimages. The Eleusinian Mysteries originated in a pre-Olympian cult formed around life, death and rebirth, conditioned by the renewal of the crops and the tutelary deity of regeneration, Demeter/Ceres. In effect, the interchangeable cycles in nature conditioning the life, death and rebirth of crops were symbolically represented by the myth of the mother-goddess Demeter/Ceres, who neglects her tutelage of crops in order to search for her daughter, Persephone/Kore/Proserpina, snatched away from the earth's surface by her uncle, the underworld god Hades / Pluto. When Demeter learns that Zeus is involved in the plot for the abduction of her daughter, she lays the conditions for the renewal of the earth crops in terms of the release of her daughter from the underworld. However, Persephone can only return to the earth for a limited time in a year, since she has, in the

meantime, married Hades. In effect, Demeter renews nature shortly before Persephone is about to re-emerge from Hades, and neglects it upon her daughter's return to the underworld.

Under the sponsorship of Athens, which occupied Eleusis around 600 BC, the local mysteries grew into the Festival of the Greater Mysteries at Eleusis, which welcomed all who spoke Greek, including women and slaves.²⁶ Despite a public rite consisting of a long procession from a ritual bathing place towards the sanctuary of Demeter in Eleusis, the festival culminated in the unique and private ritual of initiation, offering salvation in the afterlife for each separate participant. Hence, even if they were functioning as a public *theoria* (i.e. a religious festival with broadly popular and cultural significance), the Eleusinian Mysteries served the individual rather than the community or the civic body.²⁷ In effect, the Greek term used in reference to the Eleusinian Mysteries is usually *telete*, suggesting an individual initiatory process by contrast to the overly collective experience of many other religious festivals, which were typically known as *theoria*. In addition, all initiates into the Eleusinian Mysteries had to take an oath of secrecy regarding the central revelation of the Eleusinian rites. The breaking of the oath was sanctioned by the punishment of death, and even the symbolic evocation of the Mysteries was policed and sanctioned by the Athenian authorities. The works which according to the common contemporary consensus come closest to suggesting the nature of the Eleusinian Mysteries, are the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, and Aristophanes' *Frogs*.²⁸ Evidently, those mysteries were pivotal to the art and philosophy of the

²⁶ Amongst the works by contemporary scholars dedicated to the Eleusinian Mysteries, see, respectively, George Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961); Carl Kerényi, *Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); Herbert W. Parke, *Festival of the Athenians (Aspects of Greek and Roman Life)* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977); Kevin Clinton, "The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis", *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches*, eds. Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hagg (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 110-124; Walter Burkett, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); Matthew Dillon, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in Ancient Greece* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

²⁷ See Andrea Wilson Nightingale, "The Philosopher at the Festival: Plato's Transformation of Traditional Theoria", *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*, eds. Jaś Elsner and Ian Rutherford (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 151-180 (p. 175). Hereinafter Elsner-Rutherford.

²⁸ Byron might have found additional references to the Eleusinian mysteries in the following works: Homer's *Iliad* V, IX and *Odyssey* V, IX, XIX; Hesiod's *Catalogues of Women and Eoiae*, *Theogony*, *Works and Days*; Herodotus' *History* II: 171, VII: 65, IX: 65; Euripides' *Helen*, *Heracles Mad*, *Ion*, *The Bacchantes*, *The Suppliants*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*; Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* I: 52, and *Laws* II: 36; Demosthenes' *Against Neaera* 116-17; Horace's *Odes* III: ii; Ovid's *Fasti* IV and *Metamorphoses* V; Livy's *History* XXI, xiv, 6-10.

Classical world, and to their Western-European legacy. The duality inherent in the ontology of Byron's metaphysical works (e.g. *Manfred*, *Cain*, *Heaven and Earth*) is usually read in the light of Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and especially Calvinism.²⁹ However, the dualistic concept of the Eleusinian rites with regard to death and immortality, where the two simultaneous visions involving the divine mother and her daughter have their symbolic counterpart in two mythological stages where the same divinities appear in different roles (sometimes even simultaneously) should not be omitted from Byron's intertext, especially in the light of the fact that Byron's Classical primers brimmed with relevant references. According to Kerenyi, "a student of Eleusinian mythology must acquire a kind of double sight if he wishes to do justice to the entire tradition – the literary and the pictorial – with all their contradictory statements which were allowed to stand side by side" (Kerenyi, 158). In *Manfred*, the suggested blood tie between Manfred and Astarte, who are in one instance said to have "had one heart" (II.i: 26) offer a parallel with the extremely exclusive, symbiotic relationship between Ceres and Kore, the deflection of the latter causing the former to disregard the state of crops on the surface of Earth and to search for her daughter, without whom she could not function. In a parallel, "that all-nameless hour" (I.i: 25), suggesting Astarte's death, causes Manfred's world to go numb and himself to start a "vigil" ((I.i: 6) and a quest for his beloved, with whom he seems to have identified himself to the extent of experiencing her loss as the loss of his true self. In view of the importance of the Eleusinian Mysteries for the composition of *Manfred*, let me here recapitulate the nature and dynamics of those Ancient rituals.

According to their allusive testimonies, the Eleusinian rites were preceded by a period of ritual fasting and purification, after which the participants (*mystai*) would have to veil themselves and embark on a progressive torch-lit walk from one symbolically marked space to another, guided by a priest called, a hierophant. At the climax of their symbolic journey, the hierophant would show them certain sacred objects (*hiera*), the sight of which would cause them to experience a certain form of catharsis, followed by a sense of insight (*epopteia*) necessary for their individual well-being. In effect, the initiates would be called, *epoptai*. The ceremony of the Eleusinian rites was based on the progressive movement from darkness towards the light,

²⁹ See Alan Rawes, "Byron's Romantic Calvinism", *The Byron Journal* 40/2 (2012), 129-141. Henceforth Rawes 2011. Also Peter Cochran, "Byron and the Dualists", *Byron's Religions* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), pp. 274-286. Henceforth Cochran 2011. Also Barton.

beginning with the initiates standing in darkness in a building called the Telesterion. When the hierophant opened the door of the central stone chamber (Anaktoron), a stream of light blazed forth from the interior: those already initiated (*epoptai*) held torches in the room into which the *mystai* entered to receive their subjective revelation. Here, Andrea Wilson Nightingale indicates that the objective difference between the experience of the common and higher initiates (i.e. between *mystai* and *epoptai*) cannot be clearly established, and that both groups factually beheld the same sacred objects (Elsner-Rutherford, 175). In effect, we must assume that the *epopteia* was a highly subjective experience, the intensity of which depended on the emotional rather than on the intellectual level. All Ancient writers are unison in praising the efficacy of the Eleusinian rites. Thus the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* (480-482):

Blessed amongst mortals on earth is he who has seen, but the uninitiated never has the same lot once dead in the dreary darkness (Elsner-Rutherford, 175).

Pindar assures:

Blessed is he who, seeing these things, goes beneath the earth: he knows the end of life, and he knows the god-given beginning (ibid).

In more prosaic terms, Isocrates claimed that the *mystai* “have better hopes for the end of life and for all eternity” (ibid, n 41). According to Nightingale, Plato took his philosophical concept from the Festival of the Greater Mysteries at Eleusis, as attested by the imagery used in the *Republic* (ibid, 165-173, 179), as well as in *The Symposium* and *Phaedo* (173-178). In this context, Nightingale argues that Plato prefers the paradigm of the “lover of sights”, evocative of the *epopteia* of Eleusinian Mysteries, to the paradigm of “lovers of sights and sounds” participating in the Dionysian festivals (ibid, 169). In addition, Nightingale states:

Plato depicts the journey of the philosophic *theoros* in the Allegory of the Cave (*Republic*, book 7). The story begins in a dark cavern, which houses all human beings in the terrestrial realm; living in chains, their souls are condemned to watch shadowy images of earthly things flickering on the back wall of the cave – a shadow-play that they mistake for substantial reality. Released from bondage, the philosophic soul slowly makes his way up to the mouth of the cave: he makes a sort of journey abroad, experiencing real terror as he leaves the familiar region of the cave and turns toward the light. Eventually, the soul comes to the mouth of the cave and enters the metaphysical “realm” of the Forms, a realm full of light. (...) having seen true reality and goodness, the philosopher now recognizes that the shadow-figures in the cave were all copies of the beings in this realm, and that this region is the locus of true “Being”. After gazing upon the Forms and thus achieving knowledge, the philosopher returns home, journeying with reluctance back into the cave. Temporarily

blinded by the darkness in that realm, his eyes must slowly adjust to the darkness, at which point he can see in that realm better than the prisoners within it (520c) (Elsner-Rutherford, 170).

From this paradigm, Socrates defines education as an art of “turning or converting the soul . . . not an art of implanting vision in the soul but rather assuming that it already possesses vision but is not turned in the right direction or looking where it should” (580d), whereby Plato’s philosophy is approximated to a “‘private’ philosophic *theoria*” (Elsner-Rutherford, 173), corresponding to the notion of the Eleusinian *telete*:

Like the initiate at the Festival of Eleusis, Plato’s theoretical philosopher, of course, sees a spectacle that is inaccessible to ordinary individuals. By practising *theoria*, the philosopher becomes a member of an elite and exclusive group. But this does not mean that he practices secrecy, since he does not endeavour to hide or hoard his wisdom. In the ideal city, in fact, the city requires the *theoros* to introduce his vision and knowledge into the political sphere. The philosophic *theoros* in the *Republic* uses his private (intellectual) wealth for public purposes (ibid, 179).

With regard to *The Symposium*, Nightingale indicates that “Diotima uses the technical language of the Eleusinian Mysteries, explicitly referring to *theoria* at this famous festival” by calling Socrates a *mystes* (i.e. a lower initiate) who cannot yet grasp the vision privy to an *epoptes* (174). Those highest visions, clearly based on the contemplation of the Forms, are called *epoptika* (ibid). Furthermore, Diotima indicates that the philosopher who ascends correctly will move from the sight of one beautiful body to the beauty of all bodies and, from there, to the beauty of the soul, from whence he will behold the beauty of laws and institutions, and finally “theorize” (*theorein*) the Form of the Beautiful (210 a-d). According to Nightingale, Diotima in this passage “clearly identifies philosophic *theoria* with the revelation of the highest mysteries at the initiation ceremony at Eleusis” (174). Plato’s philosopher, then, has much in common with the initiate at the Mysteries: in both cases, the *theoros* “sees” a divine revelation that transforms him at soul. However, Plato diverges from his model in his claim that philosophic *theoria* makes the soul wise and happy in this life as well as the next – indeed the philosopher practices *theoria*, first and foremost, to live well in the present (176). In *Phaedrus*, however, Plato goes further in applying the system of *telete* to his philosophical concept by stating that souls before their bodily incarnation travel around the cosmos seeking “initiation” into wisdom, following in the train of the gods, who are also said to make a *theoria* to the Forms (*Phaedrus* 247 e). Nightingale indicates that Socrates again uses the paradigm of Eleusinian Mysteries in describing how both gods

and pre-incarnated human souls travel to the most distant parts of the universe in order to “see the spectacles and have a feast”, and finally gaze upon the “really real Being” (Elsner-Rutherford, 176). In effect, the “only” difference between the gods and some of human souls consists in the ability of contemplation of Forms: while gods concentrate on their upward journey to the edge of heaven and on the respective contemplation of the real fully and allowing for no interruption, some souls fail to reach the edge of heaven, or only glimpse a partial vision of the Real when getting there (ibid). Byron’s later metaphysical plays, respectively *Manfred*, *Cain*, *Heaven and Earth*, where the heroes proudly indicate a common origin of human souls and various non-material entities, with whom they embark on spiritual / cosmic travels, attest to his Platonic intertext. The most consistent reference to Plato and Eleusinian Mysteries is presented in *Manfred*, whose hero asserts at the very beginning of the play:

The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,
The lightning of my being, is as bright,
Pervading, and far-darting as your own,
And shall not yield to yours, though coop’d in clay!
(I.i: 154-157).

Later, Manfred invites Arimanes, the supreme god of Earth, to “kneel together” with himself before an even higher “overruling Infinite - the Maker / Who made him not for worship” (II.iv: 47-48). At the end of the play, Manfred reminds a host of Spirits who attempt to dominate him of ancient times when “the earth / Saw men and spirits walking side by side, / And gave ye no supremacy” (III.iv: 117-119), which in the light of his comprehensive Platonic intertext reminds of the above notion of all souls being subject to a *theoria*.

In spite of their familiarity with Plato’s dialogues, the subsequent appropriation of the Eleusinian Mysteries on the part of the eighteenth-century Whigs was conditioned by speculations regarding a form of sexual intercourse allegedly performed within the course of the rites comprising the Greater Eleusinian Mysteries. At first, the Eleusinian Mysteries involved a ritual of a symbolic sacred marriage (*hieros gamos*) between the king and the high priestess, with the latter representing the mother-goddess herself. Since the secrecy of the Eleusinian Mysteries was protected by the punishment of death, we have no evidence or testimony of a sexual intercourse actually taking place between the initiate and the priestess. In the later history of the Eleusinian mysteries the *hieros gamos* was probably replaced by a ritualistic display of the symbolic items (*hiera*). Plato and the Neo-Platonists (Christian and pagan alike) focused on the

symbolic meaning of the ceremony, effectively erasing the cultural memory of a sexual intercourse between the initiate and the priestess. The sexual aspect of the *hieros gamos* was glossed by the (alleged) facetious rituals of the Dilettanti and the Medmenhamites, and possibly alluded to by Byron in the above-cited references in the two subsequent letters to Hobhouse.³⁰ In the *Lines Inscribed on a Cup Formed From A Skull*, the monk's skull might serve in place of *hiera* exhibited in Eleusinian Mysteries, simultaneously suggesting a *memento mori* and asserting an immanent, immortal essence inherent in what used to be a mortal. In addition, drinking from the skull can be read as a form of *hieros gamos*, a ritualistic communion between the living and the dead wherein the skull substitutes for the womb, yet wine as the symbol of blood, fertility and regeneration facilitates the notion of a sacred intercourse. However, *Manfred* presents the most coherent allegorization of the Elusinian Mysteries amongst all of Byron's works, on the grounds of the play's focus on a form of personal salvation, communion with the arcane and invisible world, the resurrection of a lost Kore - aptly named Astarte (Innanna / Ishtar), the Eastern Mediterranean goddess of fertility, death and resurrection who thus united the functions of Aphrodite and Persephone – and a suggestion of a *hieros gamos*. At the onset of the play, Manfred says that his “eyes but close / To look within” (I.i: 6-7). Derived from *myein* (“to close”), the word “mystery” refers to the closing of the lips or the eyes. Closed eyes brought darkness to the prospective initiate both literally and metaphorically, and the opening of the eyes was an act of enlightenment. As the experience of “seeing” (that is, illumination) was pivotal to the mystery religions, their rites and participants were typically evoked by visual metaphors. Doubling as a mock-*hierophantes* and a mock-*hieron*, the Seventh Spirit in the initial scene of *Manfred* assumes a beautiful female shape and commands Manfred to “Behold!” (I.i: 188). Manfred's response suggests an attempt of *hieros gamos*:

Oh God! if it be thus, and *thou*
 Art not a madness and a mockery,
 I yet might be most happy. I will clasp thee,
 And we again will be –
 (I.i: 188-191).

³⁰ The fact that sexual intercourse formed part of many ancient mystery rites (as asserted in Richard Payne Knight's work) is not to be disputed. In the prehistoric Mediterranean, sex was regarded neither as a base physical function, nor as romantic. In the first place, it was a sacred activity epitomized by sexual intercourse between the king and a high priestess representing the goddess. Seen as a sacred ceremony, it was performed as a secluded but still public religious rite at various sites, of which Ephesus, Byblos and Paphos were probably the best-known.

Apparently, the *hieron* itself is not what could make Manfred “most happy”, and his *epopteia* is still far off. His *telete* goes on through the next stage in Act II, when Manfred beholds another *hieron*, the Phantom (i.e. *phantasmaton*, the sensory perception of the *Kalon*) of Astarte, who speaks to him alone, as if in allegory of personal initiation. In the initial version of Act III, the play further uses the references from the Eleusinian mysteries by describing a preparation of a ceremony featuring a casket, a key, and a “Demon Ashtaroth”. The last might be read as a reiteration of Hell-Fire legacy, a mock-adaptation of Eleusinian Mysteries with an impish figure jumping out of a casket where the *hiera* are kept.³¹ In the revised Act III, Manfred refers to the Platonic notion of the Eleusinian Mysteries (see above). After *Manfred*, Byron’s later tragedies, namely *Marino Faliero* (1821), *The Two Foscari* (1821) and *Sardanapalus* (1821), appear to have been shaped by reference to Plato’s notion of *theoria* in showing the hero acquiring a mysterious and mystifying inner liberation, which in effect gives him superiority over his circumstances. While those subsequent heroes abide by a frame of reference indebted to specific layers of national history (even if that “history” was written by, and forged on the cue from, Classical writers), Manfred, who roams through several pastoral settings and who communes with *quasi*-mythical entities found in Classical myth and lore, seems completely Greek. So much so that the play resembles a contemporary Grecian myth in recycling the apparent message of the Eleusinian Mysteries and Plato’s Socrates, namely that even immortals can “die”, at least temporarily, and that “death” should be seen as a junction and not as an ultimate, fearsome end. These premises will be further discussed in Chapter Four. In order to see to what extent Byron was equipped to understand Ancient Greece and to use its broad frame of reference, let us consult Byron’s reading list.

iii. Byron’s Cambridge reading compendium

³¹ Byron must have been familiar with a well-known anecdote circulated by John Wilkes and featured in Charles Johnstone’s novel *Chrysal; or the Adventures of a Guinea* (1776). During one of the mock-ritualistic meetings of the Hell-Fire “Friars”, aiming to resemble a Black Mass, Wilkes allegedly released a baboon dressed as the Prince of Darkness, out of a casket. Frightened to death by the apparition of what he thought was none other than “His Internal Majesty”, Lord Sandwich began to confess his sins, averring that he committed them “only from the vanity of being in fashion” (Sainsbury, p. 102). The motif of a winged entity carrying off an important (and portentous) mortal was therefore cancelled from *Manfred* and much more aptly recast in the *Vision of Judgement*. Significantly, the shadow of Wilkes also features in the satire as a “merry, cock-eyed, curious looking Sprite” (lines 521-576). See George Gordon Lord Byron, “The Vision of Judgement, By Quevedo Redivivus. Suggested by the composition so entitled by the author of ‘Wat Tyler’”, *CPW* VI, pp. 309-345 (pp. 332-334). Henceforth *TVOJ*.

On 30 November 1807, Byron completed a comprehensive reading memorandum, typically playing it down by a conclusive note stating:

the greater part of it I perused before the age of fifteen. Since I left Harrow I have become idle and conceited, from scribbling rhyme and making love to women (*Life*, 47).³²

Consequent to my previous assessment of Byron's adherence to the tradition of Whig libertinism, and of his own intellectual accomplishment and that of his friends, the above self-accusation of profligacy only serves to refer more strongly to the legacy of the eighteenth-century patrician Whigs, respectively headed by Wharton, Dashwood and Sandwich. Byron's Cambridge reading memorandum (*Life*, 46-49) provides proof of his comprehensive Classical education, if only Classical education be taken for what it really meant to provide, namely a common base for every Western-European gentleman of Byron's time. In the above-cited letter to Dallas, Byron asserted that "few nations exist or have existed with whose records I am not in some degree acquainted from Herodotus down to Gibbon" (*BLJ* I, 148). True to Byron's boyhood interest in Roman history and travelogues from Asia Minor, the list starts with "historical writers whose work I have perused in different languages" (*Life*, 46). Those languages were, respectively, English, Latin, Ancient Greek, and French. Byron's ability to read French without any comprehensive training, as well as the apparently timeless eclecticism applied in his selection of works, indicate that a Classical tradition served him as a common and immanent frame of reference. In the early nineteenth century boundaries between history, geography and political sciences were just beginning to emerge.³³ In effect, Byron's ability to discriminate between those disciplines does more justice to a gentleman's education than the subsequent generations of professional scholars were ready to admit.

Byron's list of historic writing includes his one-time Harrow primers (i.e. works

³² Also in *CMP*, pp. 1-7 (p. 6).

³³ According to James Westfall Thompson, history in the early nineteenth century was "considered a branch of *belles-lettres*. It was the occupation of the dilettante, of the gentleman of leisure, and occasionally of the dignified statesman or the ambitious literary worker". See James Westfall Thompson, *A History of Historical Writing*, with the collaboration of Bernard J. Holm, 2 vols (New York: MacMillan, 1942), II, p. 280. Contemporary historiography, especially that dedicated to Greece, was produced outside the universities, authored by various gentlemen scholars and expeditionists rather than by academics. Here, the best example is provided by William Mitford's *History of Greece* (1784-1810), highly popular throughout the nineteenth century.

by Caesar, Sallust, Entropius, Nepos, Livy, Tacitus, Arrian, Plutarch, Xenophon, Thucydides, and Herodotus) with more recent examples, such as Nathaniel Hooke's *The Roman History: From the Building of Rome to the Ruin of the Commonwealth* (1745), John Potter's *Archaeologia Graeca* (1722), Thomas Leland's *The History of the Life and Reign of Philip, King of Macedon* (1758), the widely-read English translation of Charles Rollin's *Histoire Ancienne des Egyptiens, des Carthaginois, des Assyriens, des Babyloniens, des Médes et des Perses, des Macédoniens et des Grecs* (1730), and William Mitford's *History of Greece* (1784 -1810).

The subject of the rhetoric, dubbed "Eloquence", includes Demosthenes, Cicero, Quintilian, and Sheridan. By grouping the Classical writers with a contemporary Whig, Byron clearly deduces the style of the latter from the former, true to the Whig agenda of espousing Classical republicanism.

Under "Biography", Byron mentions "Caesar, Sallust (Catiline and Jugurtha)", referring to Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, and Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae* and *Bellum Iugurthinum*. Since both Caesar and Sallust are programmatic writers rather than historians, clearly giving a specific version of history which legitimizes the winner, Byron does well in accrediting them as memoirists rather than historiographers. He links them with Thomas Mortimer's *British Plutarch: Containing the lives of the Most Eminent Statesmen, Patriots, Diviners, Warriors, Philosophers, Poets, and Artists* (1776), and William Fordyce Mayor's *British Nepos: The Lives of Illustrious Britons* (1798). The titles of these two works clearly show their adherence to the tradition of Roman historical writing.

The works on Byron's Cambridge reading list, added to those he read in childhood (see above), provide an uncommonly sound base for his subsequent travels in Greece, and for his comprehensive understanding of the country's ancient and recent past and present. Simultaneously, all those works bolstered high expectations from a prospective visit, bound to be disappointed on initial impression. In addition to the above cited works, Byron probably read Edward Daniel Clarke's *Testimonies of Different Authors, respecting the Colossal Statue of Ceres* (1803), printed by Francis Hodgson's father. In return, Clarke's *Testimonies* refers to several other travelogues: George Wheler's *A Journey into Greece* (1682), Jacob Spon's *Voyage de Grèce et du Levant* (1679), Richard Pococke's *A Description of the East* (1743), David Humphries' English translation of Bernard de Montfaucon's *Antiquity Explained and Represented in Sculpture* (1721), Abbé Barthélemy's *Voyage Du Jeune Anacharsis en Grèce* (1788),

Richard Chandler's *Travels in Greece* (1776) and Potter's *Archaeologia Graeca* (see above).³⁴

Byron's reading compendium shows a conspicuous lack of interest in contemporary economic or political writings. Still, his survey of the contemporary world was lucid. On 8 November 1808, Byron wrote to Hanson that he intended to "study India and Asiatic policy and manners" in order to claim a specific niche of knowledge and expertise, which in return would ease his way into politics (*BLJ* I, 175). Thus, Byron espouses what might be called, Orientalist attitude in professing a wish to simultaneously study and exploit the East.³⁵ True to this plan, Byron requested a passport to East India from the Duke of Portland in a letter from 20 November 1808 (*BLJ* I, 177). However, his funds would not have been sufficient to travel so far, especially in the light of the fact that he was also financing his travel-mate Hobhouse, who was temporarily cut off by his father. In effect, Byron wisely decided to travel as far as the Ottoman Empire, which at the time encompassed what used to be the territory of Xenophon's *Katabasis*, subsequently conquered by Alexander the Great and later a part of the Eastern Roman Empire. Instead of the expected £6000, he eventually received only £2000 from Hanson's agent Sawbridge. However, by a sudden stroke of luck, he received £4,800 from Scrope Berdmore Davies, who had won the sum at the gambling table (*Marchand* I, 182). Another stroke of luck came two months after Byron and Hobhouse had sailed from Falmouth. After visiting Portugal and Spain, Byron and Hobhouse were lingering in Valletta, taking Arabic lessons in the public library and socializing with British officials until they were approached by the Greek diplomat Spiridion Foresti (employed by the British foreign and secret services), who offered them a diplomatic mission to the court of the notorious Albanian tyrant, Ali Pasha in

³⁴ See Edward Daniel Clarke, *Testimonies of Different Authors, Respecting the Colossal Statue of Ceres, Placed in the Vestibule of the Public Library at Cambridge, July the First, 1803, With A Short Account of its Removal from Eleusis, November 22, 1801* (Cambridge: Francis Hodgson, 1803), pp. 10-14, 20. Edward Daniel Clarke (1769-1822), the Professor of Mineralogy at Cambridge, removed the two-ton statue presenting the cult image of Demeter / Ceres from the inner porch of the sanctuary at Eleusis, shipped it to Britain and donated it to the Cambridge University in 1803, where it was installed in the vestibule of the Cambridge Public Library.

³⁵ On Byron's literary and political Orientalism, see Nigel Leask, "'Byron turns Turk': Orientalism and the Eastern Tales", *British Romantic Writers and the East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp.13-67. Henceforth Leask. Byron's approach to Oriental studies was influenced by Sir William Jones (1746-1794), the most eminent Orientalist of his day, whose comparative approach to Ancient myth was sourced in Enlightened scepticism. See Peter Cochran, "Introduction: Byron's Orientalism", *Byron and Orientalism*, ed. Peter Cochran (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), pp. 6-7.

Tepelene.³⁶ This proposition offered an affordable exotic experience of Albania, a virtually unknown Oriental country bordering on Western civilization, in addition to visiting the ruined shrines of Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. Thus, they could boost their Orientalist and Classical scholarly interests. Moreover, their diplomatic function in Tepelene, where they were the representatives of a budding English hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean, promised to open the doors to their political futures. In short, it offered all that the two young, politically ambitious young Whigs could hope for.

Culturally as well as linguistically, Byron was more than prepared for his dream to visit Greece by the time he finally set out on his Grand Tour. As this chapter shows, he was educated in a system of Classical learning and Philhellenism from his earliest years. Now, his Classical knowledge was to be complemented by the pursuits and studies classified as “Oriental”, whereby exploring languages and areas of a society considered aberrant and underdeveloped, as discussed in the Introduction. The physical experience of Greece and its ruins and mountains began the final phase in the creation of Byron’s Greek imaginary. This final process, and its subsequent dissemination on a non-Greek landscape, will form the basis of the next chapter.

³⁶ Thus Hobhouse: “Lord Byron and myself, after a stay of three weeks in Malta, and after many hesitations whether we should bend our steps toward Smyrna or some port of European Turkey, were at last determined by the favour of the latter, by one of those accidents which often, in spite of preconcerted schemes, decide the conduct of travellers”. See John Cam Hobhouse, the Right Honourable Lord Broughton, *Travels in Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey, 1809 & 1810. Revised and corrected edition*, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1858), I, p. 1. Henceforth *Travels* I. The “accident” casually referred to was Foresti’s diplomatic offer. See Peter Cochran, “‘Nature’s Gentle Errors’: Byron, the Ionian Islands, and Ali Pacha”, *Byron Journal* 23 (1995), 22-35 (pp. 23-27). Henceforth Cochran 1995.

CHAPTER TWO: BYRON'S LEVANTINE TOUR

When Byron set out on his Grand Tour in the summer of 1809, he was, on the surface, a typical young aristocratic Englishman of his day, rank and race. Lady Hester Stanhope, who met Byron in Athens in September 1810, thought him to be “nothing more but a well-bred man, like many others; for as for poetry, it is easy enough to write verses” (Marchand I, 259). Even if Byron’s satire (and some of his juvenile lyrics) were admired by his Cambridge and Southwell friends, he was but one amongst the many talented young gentlemen who wrote in their “hours of idleness”. However, “the air of Greece”, as he later admitted to Trelawney, was to make all the difference in his approach to poetry (Marchand I, 277).

In the Preface to *CHP* I, Byron defines his Greek landscape as “Epirus, Acarnania and Greece” (*CPW* II, 3), the last term obviously denoting Ancient *Stereia Ellada* (“the Greek Continent”), which in return spanned Boeotia and Phocis (i.e the sites of Delphi, Mount Parnassus, Mount Helicon, and Thebes). Byron’s deliberate identification of his preferred landscape with those three separate regions is not only historical, but political. While Aetolia, Acarnania and Epirus belonged to the Ottoman Empire, *Stereia Ellada* (in addition to the Peloponese and Attica) was considered as the only mainland territory inhabited by what was once the race of Ancient Greeks. Despite his Whig Philhellenic upbringing, Byron preferred the Ottoman Greece coerced by the Albanian tyrant Ali Pasha. The motif of a guilty conscience, torn between loyalty to tradition and - to reiterate McGann - a “sympathy for the devil” (Soderholm, 101), was to be nurtured in, and form part of, his inner Greek landscape.¹ It was anticipated in Byron’s earlier hero-worship of Napoleon, the national enemy of Britain, whose bust he kept on his mantelpiece in Harrow and fought for his right to do so (*BLJ* III, 210). In proof, Byron wrote to his mother (12 November 1809) that Ali Pasha “was a remorseless tyrant, guilty of the most horrible cruelties, [yet] very brave & so good a

¹ According to Galt, Byron somehow created the idea of a collective human guilt during his childhood visit to the Malvern hills in Scotland (Galt, p. 206). Similarly, Barton and Rawes argue that Byron’s lifelong championing of human freedom and a pervading sense of doom derive from his Scottish childhood (e.g. Barton, pp. 6-40; Rawes 2012, pp. 129-141). However, both Barton and Christine Kenyon-Jones indicate that, while in Aberdeen, Byron and his mother attended St Paul’s Episcopal Church, which adhered to the Church of England. See Barton, pp. 22-23, and Christine Kenyon-Jones, “‘I was bred a Moderate Presbyterian’: Byron, Thomas Chalmers and Scottish Religious Heritage”, *Romanticism and Religion from William Cowper to Wallace Stevens*, eds. Gavin Hopps and Jane Stabler (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 107-119 (pp. 109-110). Henceforth Hopps and Stabler. Moreover, Byron’s prose and poetry prior to his experience of mainland Greece give no evidence of collective doom and gloom. Instead, they attest to a Classical intertext and the influence of a Harrow Deism, discussed in the previous chapter. Rawes, for his part, deduces Byron’s Calvinist intertext from works written after his Levantine Grand Tour, namely *Cilde Harold’s Pilgrimage*, *Manfred* and *Cain*.

general, that they call him the Mahometan Buonaparte” (*BLJ* I, 228).² The comparison with Napoleon, as well as the fact that Ali Pasha was the most powerful man Byron ever came to face, account for Byron’s fascination. In addition, his attitude can be taken as proof of his diplomatic skill and understanding of the realities of the Ionian War between the French and the English, where Ali Pasha was needed as an English ally. Peter Cochran claims that Byron’s attraction to the older man was based on sexual attraction rather than on fascination with power, or on his previous memory of Napoleon (Cochran 1995, 33).³ However, the evidence of Hobhouse’s prose and the (para)text of Byron’s *CHP* I-II indicate that their divided attitude to Ali Pasha was facilitated by their political sophistication rather than the lack of it.⁴ Apparently, Byron’s fascination with Ali Pasha additionally inspired his Oriental scholarship, comprising the studies of Romaic Greek and contemporary Greek literature, as well as of the Arnaout dialect (*CPW* II, 192-217). Byron and Hobhouse saw nothing of the “Classical”, to speak nothing of *to Hellenikon* defined in contrast to the Orientals by Herodotus, as mentioned in the Introduction. The text and critical apparatus of *CHP* I-II

² In *Manfred*, Arimanes is introduced as a tyrant and a warlord (II.iv: 1-16). Nemesis and the three Destinies, the servants of Arimanes, make sure that injustice rules the world (II.iii: 16-71). In doing, they obey their master’s commands: “Glory to Arimanes! on the earth / His power increaseth – both my sisters did / His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty!” (II.iv: 17-19). However, Arimanes and his servants will show Manfred their beneficial side, granting him his wishes and letting him go away from the Hall of Arimanes alive, safe and escorted by their compliments: “Hath he been one of us, he would have made / An awful spirit” (II.iv: 162-163). The instance of an unjust tyrant showing a personable side to a single individual might have been inspired by Byron’s early *tête-à-tête* with Ali Pasha, of whose cruelties he had been previously informed.

³ According to Cochran, a possible short-term liaison between Byron and Ali Pasha was at the cause of Byron’s latter-day Philhellenism, based on the poet’s guilt over sleeping with the enemy of Greece (Cochran 1995, p. 33). In contrast to Cochran, Stephen Minta asserts that Byron was unrepentant in admiring Ali Pasha as a proverbial “man’s man” and voluptuary. See Stephen Minta, *On a Voiceless Shore* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), pp. 51, 169. Henceforth Minta.

⁴ For instance, while describing Ali Pasha as

Albania’s chief, whose dread command
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold:
(*CHP* II. xlvii: 418-420),

Byron glosses the tyrant as “The celebrated Ali Pacha (sic). Of this man there is an incorrect account in Pouqueville’s *Travels*” (*CPW* II, p. 288). The work *Voyage en Morée, en Constantinople, en Albanie, et dans plusieurs autres parties de l’Empire Othoman* (1805) by the French geographer and diplomat François Charles Hugues Laurent Pouqueville (1770-1835) successfully informed the world of Ali Pasha’s atrocities against French prisoners of war, his former allies and his own subjects. Hobhouse’s contemporary journal and subsequent travelogue amply attest to his and Byron’s aloof attitude to the plight of local Greeks. See John Cam Hobhouse, “Greece and Albania, September 20th – December 24th 1809” [transcription from British Library, Addington MS 56527, 20 September – 24 December 1809], ed. Peter Cochran, *Peter Cochran’s Website*, <<http://www.petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/04-greece2.pdf>>, n.d. [c 2009] [Accessed 6 June 2011]. Henceforth Hobhouse 1809. Also *Travels* I, pp. 68, 72-74.

attest to Byron's disappointed expectations with regard to Classical Greece, the traces of which were not found in the contemporary Greek landscape. Hobhouse, for his part, asserts in his *Travels* that the Greeks

retain inviolate those habits of living and the manners which we are accustomed to call oriental, and which they did not learn from the Turks, but had derived, as might easily be proved, from the immemorial usages of their remotest ancestors (*Travels* I, 220).

This comment anticipates William St. Claire's claim that, apart from the high-class intelligentsia and the expatriates who lived in European cities, "in Greece itself the Greeks still thought of themselves as the Christian inhabitants of a Moslem Empire, not as the descendants of the Hellenes".⁵ The name *Hellas* was hardly used amongst those Greeks, who, as noted in the Introduction, called themselves, "*hoi Romaioi*" (i.e. the Romans), an allusion to the Eastern Roman Empire or, the Byzant, wherein national identity was forged on the grounds of religion rather than of nationality. Thus, the Romaic Greek language and its literary canon were based on translations from contemporary European languages, or on Scriptural writings, rather than on the legacy of Ancient Greeks.

In the "Additional Note, on the Turks", appended to *CHP* I-II, Byron credits the Ottoman conquerors of Greece for honesty in money matters and expresses his gratitude "for many civilities (I might almost say for friendship), and much hospitality, to Ali Pacha, his son Veli Pacha of the Morea, and several others of high mark in the provinces" (*CPW* II, 209). However, his attitude to the contemporary Greeks was to remain ambivalent until his death.⁶ Upon his return to London, he wrote to his friends that he was unable to make up his mind about the Greeks (*BLJ* II, 115, 124), and cautioned William Bankes, who was about to leave for the Levant, to "trust not the *Greeks*" (*BLJ* II, 262), the italics in his letter suggesting that Bankes should rather trust

⁵ See William St. Clair, *That Greece might still be free: the Philhellenes in the War of Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 22.

⁶ In the extensive note to *CHP* II: lxxiii, Byron asserts that the Greeks will never be independent, "and God forbid they ever should! but they may be subjects without being slaves. Our colonies are not independent, but they are free and industrious, and such may Greece be hereafter" (*CPW* II, p. 201). Also, providing a selection of his translations from the Romaic in the Appendix to *CHP* I-II, Byron simultaneously indicates that recent and contemporary Greek literature is that of "an enslaved people, obliged to have recourse to foreign presses even for their books of religion" (*CPW* II, p. 211). In his final piece of prose, *The Present State of Greece* (26 February 1824), written while envoy of London Greek Society, Byron calls the contemporary Greeks "downright Slaves ... and there is no tyrant like a Slave" (*CMP*, p. 193). According to Frederick Rosen, Byron's ambivalent attitude to contemporary Greeks was more or less typical of Whig Philhellenes, especially those who shared his mission in Greece on behalf of the London Greek Society. See Frederick Rosen, *Bentham, Byron, and Greece: Constitutionalism, Nationalism and Early Liberal Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

their Ottoman conquerors. Still, despite stating that the contemporary Greeks were “a melancholy example of the near connection between moral degradation and national decay” (*CPW* II, 206), Byron thought all Greek men “beautiful, very much resembling the busts of Alcibiades, the women not quite so handsome” (*BLJ* I, 238), thus espousing an exemplary Orientalist attitude to the other, seen as weak and deficient yet attractive, dependent and in need of protection - hence “feminine”. According to Nigel Leask, Byron “perpetuates the prejudice of the East / West binary opposition whilst attacking the ideology of empire which it empowers” (Leask, 4). Arguably interested in (and concerned about) the contemporary Greeks as European others, Byron simultaneously regarded his Oriental studies as a convenient political niche within Whig society, where scholars in Romaic Greek were still few and far between.⁷ Byron’s brand of Orientalism was more realistic in artistic representation, but also more politically complicated, as shown in his Notes and the Appendix to *CHP* I-II - perhaps precisely on the grounds of his transgressive familiarity with the Oriental other. The following section attempts to trace various strands interwoven in Byron’s brand of Orientalism – scholarly as well as artistic.

BYRON’S ORIENTALISM AND ANTIQUARIANISM

Byron started with his Romaic lessons during his stay in Ioannina (November 1809), with a patriotic scholar and schoolmaster, Athanasios Psalida, who gave Byron and Hobhouse initial information on contemporary Greek literature (*Travels* I, 62 a, *CPW* II, 207, 213). In Athens, Byron continued taking lessons in Romaic with a merchant named Ioannis Marmarotouri (Marchand I, 268), whose Romaic translation of Abbé Barthélemy’s *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce* he subsequently mentioned in the Appendix to *CHP* I-II (*CPW* II, 206).⁸ His additional Greek teachers were respectively Eustathios Georgiou, whom he met in Vostizza (*BLJ* II, 10), and Nicolo Giraud, the brother-in-law to Elgin’s Italian draughtsman, Gian-Battista Lusieri, whom he met in

⁷ Having met Professor Edward Daniel Clarke, who was not fluent in Romaic Greek, in Cambridge on 22 October 1811, Byron immediately wrote to Hobhouse as to how their linguistic proficiency and basic information on contemporary Greek literature offered them a specific niche amongst the Philhellenes (*BLJ* II, p. 117).

⁸ For Byron’s expertise in the Romaic, see Raizis 1988, pp. 82-88, pp. 210, 225. Also Roger Poole, “What constitutes, and what is external to, the “real” text of Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, A Romaunt: And Other Poems* (1812)”, *Lord Byron the European*, ed. Richard A. Cardwell (New York: Mellen, 1997), pp. 149-207.

the Capuchin monastery in Athens, where he lived from August 1810 until March 1811, writing and studying amongst the teenage sons of the Frank families who attended the monastic boarding school (*BLJ* II, 11-12). Besides learning Romaic Greek and Italian, Byron during that time completed *CHP* I-II and wrote *The Curse of Minerva* and *Hints from Horace*.

Upon his return to England, Byron assured a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, the Rev. Richard Valpy (19 November 1811): “My researches, such as they were, when in the East, were more diverted to the language & the inhabitants, than to Antiquities” (*BLJ* II, 134). Thus, Byron asserted himself as an Orientalist, whose interests were dialectically opposed to those of a Philhellenist. However, Byron’s chosen field of research did not exclude contemporary antiquarianism, the discoveries of which often went against the grain of testimonies left by Classical writers in showing how daily life and religious habits of Greece had been profoundly and continuously shaped by her Oriental neighbours, Egypt and Persia. Besides, many of the English gentlemen whom Byron met and befriended in Greece doubled as Orientalists and Philhellenists in excavating and expatriating relics of Ancient Greek sculptures, to name but the most significant in the context of Byron’s Greek explorations.

Sir William Drummond (1770-1828), British MP and diplomat to the courts of Constantinople and Naples from 1801 to 1809, met with Byron and Hobhouse in Gibraltar on 12 August 1809 (Marchand I, 195). In effect, they might have profited from Drummond’s advice on travel literature on the grounds of the older man’s great knowledge of antiquarianism and comparative mythology. Upon his return from Greece, Byron read Drummond’s privately printed *Oedipus Judaicus* (1811). He immediately extolled the work in a series of letters, respectively to Hodgson, to Harness and to Hobhouse (6 – 15 December 1811) (*BLJ* II, 140, 142, 147).⁹ Captain William Martin Leake (1777-1860), British Consul in Ioannina in charge of the mission in Tepelene, showed Byron and Hobhouse the ruins of Ioannina and its lake, and the remains of Dodona and Nicopolis (Hobhouse 1809, 65, 86, 95). In the Appendix to *CHP* I-II, Byron commends Leake as the ultimate authority on contemporary Greece, stating that Leake (together with Drummond, Gell, Clarke and his associate Robert

⁹ Building on the work of Sir William Jones, who included the Biblical story of Genesis in his research on Indo-European myth, Drummond’s work argues that the Old Testament, especially Genesis, narrates astronomical allegories instead of giving historical facts. This approach was characteristic of Enlightened Deism, ingested by Byron at Harrow. In effect, Byron’s comparative approach to Greek, Zoroastrian and Hebrew myth, espoused in *Manfred*, *Cain*, *Heaven and Earth*, seems to draw on the Enlightened Orientalism of Jones and Drummond.

Walpole, to whom he later added Elgin's associate, William Richard Hamilton and the 4th Lord Aberdeen), has "all the requisites to furnish details on this fallen people" (*CPW* II, 209). During 1810, Byron's entourage, apart from Lord Sligo and the two young Greeks, consisted principally of draughtsmen and antiquaries. Those were, respectively, Elgin's draughtsman Gian-Battista Lusieri, the German archaeologists Karl Freiherr Haller von Hallerstein and Jakob Linckh, the Danish archaeologist, Peter Oluf Bronsted, the English antiquarians John Fyott (later a member of the Society of Antiquaries and president of Royal Astronomical society), Sandford Graham (later MP and a member Society of Antiquaries), William Haygarth, and the architects John Foster and Charles Robert Cockerell. Cockerell, Foster, Haller and Linckh excavated the temple on Aegina in 1811.¹⁰ In proof of Byron's high reputation amongst contemporary antiquarians, Professor Clarke offered him membership of the Athenian society upon his return to Britain. Byron was forced to decline the offer on the grounds of his previous criticism of Lord Elgin and, to a lesser extent, of the Earl of Aberdeen (*BLJ* II, 156-157). However, he conceded that "should these omissions & offences be got over, I should feel truly happy in being one of the Elect" (*ibid*).

i. Byron's itineraries

According to Marchand, Byron's preparatory reading for his Grand Tour began in the spring of 1809, when he bought an erratic miscellany of books, including "Porter's *Travels*, Barrow's *China*, Dallas' *Constantinople*, as well as the works of Burns, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*, twenty-five volumes of *British Theatre*, Gifford's *Baeviad* and *Maeviad*, Miss Edgeworth's *Tales*, *Elegant Extracts*, and *Selections from the Gentleman's Magazine*" (Marchand I, 183). However, it must be borne in mind that Byron started reading Roman history and travelogues from Asia Minor while he was still in Aberdeen, and continued to do so until he left Cambridge. Hence, we must regard all the works of his Cambridge reading list as his travel literature, since they all happen to form part of a contextual whole based on a pilgrimage to the cradle of Western European civilization, namely to the regions once belonging to the Ancient and

¹⁰ The records of Byron's guided expeditions are given sporadically in two letters to Hodgson (14 November 1810, 10 January 1811), three letters to Hobhouse (26 November 1810, 5 December 1810, 18 January 1810) and a letter to his mother (14 January 1811). See *BLJ* II, pp. 26-34.

Hellenistic Greece. Even so, Byron was open to new sources encompassing the latest British travel literature as well as recent topographical works authored by Greeks.

Shortly before he left for Greece, Byron paid a conciliatory visit to his former schoolmaster Dr Butler in Harrow, whom he previously portrayed as “Pomposus” in *Hours of Idleness* (CPW I, 132, 164, 172, 173). On this occasion, Byron probably acquired a private edition of William Gell’s *Itinerary of Greece, with a Commentary on Pausanias and Strabo* (c 1808), since Gell was Butler’s old friend.¹¹ Intended as a practical guide for English gentlemen in Greece, Gell’s *Itinerary* provided maps, drawings and geographical distances, as well as existent roads, edifices, ancient and modern names of cities and rivers. Notably, Gell juxtaposes the recent discoveries by English and French explorers with earlier testimonies by Plutarch, Ptolemy, Herodotus, Callimachus, Strabo, and especially Pausanias.

Byron’s most cherished source on Greek topography was *Ancient and Modern Geography* (1728) by the Greek historiographer Meletius of Ioannina (1661-1714), the Archbishop of Athens. He stole the Venetian edition of the work from the library of the bishop of Chrisso on 14 December 1809, before his Parnassian excursion (BLJ II, 60). He later proudly stated in a letter to the Rev. Robert Walpole (September 1812) that all of worth among his books from Greece boiled down to Meletius, a Romaic lexicon in three quarto volumes, a few Greek grammars and an unspecified “Testament” (BLJ II, 190). Rather than suggesting the poet’s conventional piety, the last work speaks in proof of his interest in comparative mythology, based on Greek scriptural writings following Jones, whose Oriental scholarship was based on Biblical studies.

Byron, of course, could have applied to Hobhouse’s choice of travel literature during their time in Greece (September 1809 – July 1810). During their stay in Gibraltar (8 August 1809), Hobhouse noted down his purchase of Jean Baptiste Bourignon D’Anville’s “Geography”, probably referring to *Etats formés après la*

¹¹ According to Marchand, the work was published in 1808 (BLJ I, p. 238 n3). Considering the timespan of its composition (i.e. 1801-1807), some initial version might have been privately published before the official date of issue. As proof of Byron’s familiarity with Gell’s *Itinerary*, Lord Sligo, who explored Morea and Corinth with Byron in the summer of 1810 (BLJ II, pp. 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 11, 13-14, 16), wrote to his mother on 5 September 1810: “I hope you have been able to succeed in sending out Gell to me (sic) He will be of immense service to me” (Boston, Yale Library, Beinecke MA, OSB MSS 74 Box 1, fol. 2). See also George Gordon, Lord Byron, “Byron’s Correspondence and Journals 02: From the Mediterranean, July 1809 – July 1811”, ed. Peter Cochran [November 2010 (2 February 2009)], *Peter Cochran’s webpage*, <<http://petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/02-mediterranean-1809-181125.pdf>> [Accessed 16 February 2011], p. 63. The work Sligo requested from his mother was certainly Gell’s *Itinerary*, covering the topography of the Morea relevant to their expeditions, and previously recommended by Byron.

chute de l'Empire Romain en Occident (1771).¹² During their mission to Tepelene, Hobhouse refers to Pouqueville's *Voyage en Morée, en Constantinople, en Albanie, et dans plusieurs autres parties de l' Empire Othoman* (1805), albeit in a derogatory manner (Hobhouse 1809, 66). Also, he had in his possession the anthology of the ancient Greek writers, entitled, *Αναλεκτα Ελληνικά Μειζονα, sive, Collectanea Graeca Majora* (1805) by the Scottish scholar Andrew Dalzel (1742-1806) (ibid, 109). Hobhouse's revised *Travels* often refer to Richard Chandler (1738-1810) who, after a two-year excursion financed by the Dilettanti, produced *Travels in Asia Minor* (1775), *Travels in Greece* (1776) and *History of Ilium* (1803). In addition, Hobhouse's later *Travels in Albania* often provide citations from Meletius, albeit in order to dispute the Greek geographer's veracity (e.g. *Travels* I, 224 b, 388, 431). Similarly, Hobhouse occasionally laughs off the testimonies of Lady Mary Wortley Montague (e.g. *Travels* I, 137-138), whose epistolary travelogues had been amongst Byron's childhood primers on the Ottoman Empire, as mentioned in Chapter One. Herodotus, Strabo, Plutarch and Pausanias are the most often cited sources in Hobhouse's travelogue, amongst whom Strabo and Pausanias are especially credited for "have presented us with works no less historical than geographical" (*Travels* I, 227). For Byron and Hobhouse and for so many others, Pausanias was the ur-itinerary of Greece, his testimony of Ancient names providing a necessary bridge between the Ancient and the contemporary Greek landscape. As Gell maintained in the seventh revised edition of his *Itinerary* (1827), no original name of Ancient Greek topography could be retraced without Pausanias.¹³ According to Hobhouse, Pausanias bestowed on his reader "the power (...) of indulging in the same pleasing speculations", without which "travelling in modern Greece would be an irksome and unsatisfactory labour" (*Travels* I, 435). Thus, Hobhouse anticipates the recent argument of Jaś Elsner, according to which Romantic scholars in Britain and Germany attempted to reconstruct Pericles' fifth-century BC Greece with the help of Pausanias' descriptions of the Ancient ruins and relics surviving into the second century AD (Elsner, 163). In effect, Elsner argues that Pausanias was pivotal to the formation of art history, archaeology, anthropology "as

¹² See John Cam Hobhouse, "Spain and Sardinia, July 24th –August 30th 1809", ed. Peter Cochran [transcription from British Library Addington MA. 56527, 24 July – 30 August 1809], n.d. (c 2009), *Peter Cochran's website*, <<http://petercochran.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/02-Spain.pdf>> [Accessed 16 July 2011], p. 14 n74.

¹³ See William Gell, *The Itinerary of Greece: Containing one hundred routes in Attica, Boeotia, Phocis, Locris, and Thessaly*, new [7th] edition. (London: John Rodwell, 1827), p. 286.

well as the Picturesque and certain forms of Romanticism”, and most notably, of Philhellenism (ibid).

ii. Pausanias

Pausanias’ *Tes Ellados Periegesis*, or *Graeciae Descriptio*, is the only extensive example of a once popular Classical genre of *periegesis*, which anticipated the eighteenth-century travelogue. The work gives an extensive account of ancient cities and sites (i.e. their relics preserved into the second century AD), of the remnants of legendary battles, and of various rituals pertaining to Ancient oracles and sanctuaries, thus presenting a highly subjective landscape where Ancient and Hellenistic Greek relics, legends and myths replaced the Roman present. Pausanias typically approved of the sites of his chosen landscape by the formulaic phrases, “worthy of seeing”, “worthy of memory”, “worthy of description”. His stories, whether myths or historical legends, as well as his notion of “all things Greek” (*panta ta Ellenika*) are always centered around relics of temples, statues and shrines, sometimes still standing, sometimes vanished. *The Description of Greece by Pausanias* (1794) in three volumes, translated and edited by the influential Neo-Platonist, Thomas Taylor (1758-1835), was the best and fullest English version of Pausanias’ *periegesis* produced before Byron’s Grand Tour. According to Elsner, Taylor’s edition of Pausanias was “visionary” rather than scholarly on the grounds of his Neo-Platonic endnotes, offering “a religious view of monuments and artefacts within an idyllic Greek landscape” owing to the lavish illustrations of Joseph Michael Gandy (Elsner, 160).¹⁴ The above-evoked religious view on the Greek imaginary (the latter spanning scarce Classical ruins, mythical references and pastoral tropes) seems reiterated in Byron’s later description of Greece in *Detached Thoughts*, a series of recollections composed between 15 October 1821 and 18 May 1822:

Upon Parnassus going to the fountain of Delphi (Catri) in 1809 – I saw a flight of twelve Eagles – (Hobhouse says they are Vul tures - at least in Conversation) and I seized the Omen. – On the day before, I composed the lines to Parnassus – (in Childe Harold) and on beholding the birds – had a hope

¹⁴ Similarly, Maureen Perkins argues that Taylor’s editions and translations “did not conform to the standard expected by some classical scholars, but his interest was a more passionate, devotional one. His translations made Neoplatonic ideas available to a wide array of Romantic writers, helping to shape the forms in which they could express their own dissatisfaction with the contemporary scene” (McCalman, p. 725).

– that Apollo had accepted my homage (...) I *have been* – a votary of the Deity
– and the place – and am grateful for what he has done on my behalf – leaving
the future in his hands as I left the past (*BLJ IX*, 41).

Obviously, Byron had Taylor's Pausanias by his side on his way towards Athens, the edition alternatively serving him as a travel guide and a sourcebook with regard to the tropes referring to the landscape marked by vanished ruins. From the eighteenth-century, English painters had espoused a panoramic approach to landscape, which in return paralleled panoramic descriptions of landscape in the works of Classical authors. Byron naturally ingested the canon of the picturesque, since it was the normative aesthetic theory of assessing and describing landscape in the eighteenth century, respectively guiding the descriptions of his predecessors on their European travels and Grand Tours.¹⁵ Describing his situation in the Athenian monastery to Hodgson (20 January 1811), Byron wrote:

I am living in a Capuchin Convent, Hymettus before me, the Acropolis behind,
the temple of Jove to my right, the Stadium in front, the town to the left, eh,
Sir, there's a situation, there's your picturesque! (*BLJ II*, 37).

He thus provides evidence of being influenced by Pausanias' discourse, and of the association of that discourse with that of the picturesque, as has been discussed in the Introduction.¹⁶ Thus, Martyn Corbett rates *Manfred's* Colloseum lines (factually written upon Byron's visit to Rome in April 1817), as "a fine piece of the picturesque, much in the Childe Harold manner" (Corbett, 44). In establishing an associative proximity of *Manfred* and *Harold*, Corbett follows Galt and anticipates McGann's speculation on *Manfred's* Levantine provenance, given in the Introduction. Even while surveying "the chief relics of almighty Rome" (III.iv: 11), *Manfred* appears to credit the moon for creating the Pausanian (Greek) perspective in selectively illuminating ruins:

And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,
As 'twere, anew, the gaps of centuries;

¹⁵ Before reading Taylor's edition of Pausanias, Byron might have been familiar not only with Price's anthology, but also with the two complete translations in French, and an anonymous English extract. Those earlier translations are, respectively, Nicolas Gedoy, *Pausanias ou voyage historique de la Grèce* (Paris: Didot, 1731), Etienne Clavier, *Description de la Grèce, traduction nouvelle* (Paris: Eberhart, 1814), and the anonymous translation entitled, *An Extract Out of Pausanias: Statues, Pictures and Temples in Greece, Which Were Remaining There in His Time* (London: Shropshire and Dodd, 1758). Cf Elsner, p. 170.

¹⁶ Thus, Elsner's argument that Pausanias' approach to landscape influenced the subsequent theories of his translator, Sir Richard Uvedale Price seems corroborated by Byron's approach to landscape.

Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship of the great of old! -
(III.iv: 31-39).

Thus, Manfred takes a break from his present circumstances by turning back to his memories of an Ancient landscape, associated with the mythic past, in the manner anticipated by the patriotic Greek traveller who described what politically pertained to the Roman Empire, yet chose deliberately to step back in time in order to recreate what was once sovereign Greek land. In turning back to “The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule / Our spirits from their urns” (III.iv: 40-41), Manfred appears to evoke the Greek imaginary, which in return overlaps with what the Pausanian picturesque aims to recreate.¹⁷ Several years after his roamings in Grece with Pausanias as his main guide, Byron wrote to Hobhouse from Brussels (1 May 1816): “Will you bring out *pasanias* [sic] (Taylor’s ditto) when you come - ” (*BLJ* V, 74). He had then just read Taylor’s *A Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries* (1792), published in the same publication containing an essay written by his young physician, Dr John William Polidori. Byron was then drafting *CHP* III, whose immediate impressions were sparked by his visit to the recent battlefields of Flanders. To reiterate the Introduction, the Continental Tour, which spanned the borders of one-time Roman Empire, was a Western-European gentleman’s *theoria* across his cultural legacy. However, in the second half of eighteenth century this legacy was based on Ancient Greece, now seen as the progenitor of Rome’s civic legacy. Pausanias’ travelogue was a synecdoche of a Greek imaginary, evoking the absent presence of Greece, the defunct land of European origins, and offering the possibility of its projection onto other landscapes which once pertained to the Roman Empire by means of linguistic tropes - a “legacy” amounting to stories of vanished ruins and legends of battles. In a letter from Evian from 23 June 1816, Byron requested “Taylor’s *Pawrsanias*” (sic) for the second time (*BLJ* V, 80). According to Peter Cochran, Hobhouse did bring Byron Taylor’s Pausanias, and the edition was by his side in the time during which he was touring the Bernese Alps in the

¹⁷ In the passage of *A Letter to John Murray, Esq^re*, cited in the Introduction, Byron follows Manfred in looking away from the contemporary in order to look back to his Greek imaginary, stating that “it is the ‘Art’ – the Columns – the temples – the wrecked vessel – which give [the picturesque sites] their antique and their modern poetry – and not the spots themselves” (*CMP*, p. 133).

company of Hobhouse and drafting *Manfred*.¹⁸ In *Manfred*, the eponymous hero draws on Pausanias when stating that he made

Mine eyes familiar with Eternity,
Such as, before me, did the Magi, and
He who from out their fountain dwellings raised
Eros and Anteros, at Gadara,
As I do thee; -
(II.ii: 90-94).

In the play's manuscript, Byron glossed the above lines with a reference to Eunapius' *Lives of the Sophists*, and to Pausanias (*vide* Taylor III, 252-253), both of which refer to the Greco-Syrian Neo-Platonist and magus Iamblichus. Byron subsequently erased the reference to Pausanias from the the manuscript (Cochran 2001, 64), probably on the grounds of Manfred's voicing another reference to Taylor's Pausanias in the same scene.¹⁹ Preparing to search for Astarte in the realm of the dead, Manfred refers to "the Spartan Monarch" who drew

From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping spirit
An answer and his destiny – he slew
That which he loved, unknowing what he slew,
And died unpardon'd - though he call'd in aid
The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused
The Arcadian Evocators to compel
The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
Or fix her term of vengeance – she replied
In words of dubious import, but fulfill'd
(II.ii: 184-192).

Here, Byron imbues Manfred's lines with a reference to Classical (Greek) sources, Plutarch and Pausanias:

The story of Pausanias, king of Sparta (who commanded the Greeks in the battle of Platea, and afterwards perished for an attempt to betray the Lacedemonians), and Cleonice, is told in Plutarch's life of Cimon; and in the Laconics of Pausanias the Sophist, in his description of Greece (*CPW* IV, 473).²⁰

In the Preface to his edition of Pausanias, Taylor identifies Pausanias as the sophist Pausanias the Syrian, a student of Herodus Atticus who lived during Hadrian's reign

¹⁸ See Peter Cochran, "Manfred and Thomas Taylor", *Byron Journal* 29 (2001), 62-71 (p. 62). Henceforth Cochran 2001.

¹⁹ McGann does not mention Byron's deleted manuscript note regarding Pausanias, but only his reference to *The Lives of the Sophists* (*CPW* IV, p. 472). In contrast to Cochran, who sees Manfred's Neo-Platonism as primarily sourced in that of Thomas Taylor, James Twitchell argues that Byron was familiar with Eunapius. See James Twitchell, "The Supernatural Structure of Byron's *Manfred*", *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 15/4 (Autumn 1975), 601-614 (p. 603).

²⁰ In Italy, Byron told Medwin that he wanted to write a drama about the same Pausanias, who won the battle of Platea for the Greeks but later sided with the Persians (Medwin, p. 123).

(i.e. in the second century AD).²¹ The notion of Pausanias as a sophist appealed to Byron, who fondly referred to the sophists who taught rhetorics in Classical Athens, by the synecdoche of Zeno in his letter to Dallas, mentioned in Chapter One.²²

iii. The pastoral and the sublime

In contrast to the legacy of ruins, which are a *memento mori*, Byron's Greek imaginary has an alternative side, which defies death by being evergreen, exotic and based on pastoral tropes. It is similarly backward-looking, as admitted by Byron himself in the following reminiscence of his Grand Tour:

Travelling in Greece, Hobhouse and I wrangled every day. His guide was Mitford's fabulous History. He had a greed for legendary lore, topography, inscriptions; gabbled in *lingua franca* to the Ephori of the villages, goatherds, and our dragoman. He would potter with map and compass at the foot of Pindus, Panes and Parnassus, to ascertain the site of some ancient temple or city. I rode my mule up to them. They had haunted my dreams from boyhood; the pines, eagles, vultures and owls were descended from those Themistocles and Alexander had seen, and were not degenerated like the humans; the rocks and torrents the same (Marchand I, 223).

Thus, Byron presents an alternative tactic of recreating the Greek imaginary, violated by history. Again, his solution relied on Classical tropes – albeit from a different frame of reference than that of ruins. As Bernard Beatty indicates, Byron's "poetry of the scene" is typically based on "tantalising juxtaposition of factual and symbolic detail" (Beatty 1988, 14). As proof, Beatty cites from Byron's *The Island*, where Byron "recalls how his first sight of the real but fabled landscape of Troy fused with his earliest memories of Scotland so that, amazingly, 'Loch-na-gar with Ida looked o'er Troy . . .'" (ibid, 14-15). This conflation of North-Western and imaginary Greek

²¹ See Thomas Taylor, *The Description of Greece, by Pausanias. Translated from the Greek. With notes, In which much of the Mythology of the Greeks is unfolded from a Theory which has been for many Ages unknown. And illustrated with maps and views elegantly engraved*, 3 vols (London: R. Faulder, 1794), I, p. v. Henceforth Taylor. Pausanias' identity remains uncertain to this day, as he became famous only posthumously, when his periegesis became canonical for Byzantine lexicographers (c 560 AD). Most sources agree that he was an educated, aristocratic traveller from Asia Minor, probably from Magnesia near Mt Sypilos (Elsner, p. 162).

²² By tracing Byron's note to the third book of Taylor's Pausanias, containing mostly notes to the previous two books, we get further directions as to the actual reference to the respective altars to Eros and Anteros, erected near the Athenian Academy (Taylor I, p. 91). Byron completed *CHP* I-II in a contemporary Athenian Academy, which appears to have echoed the spirit of Ancient Greek (homoerotic) *bonhomie* described in Plato's works (e.g. *BLJ* II, p. 12), even if situated within the walls of a Capuchin monastery. This encrypted parallel speaks in favour of the argument on *Manfred*'s Greek intertext and (Levantine) provenance.

landscape is made possible through pastoral tropes, which conditioned landscape description and anticipated what came to be termed “Nature”, as I have shown in the Introduction. Byron’s juvenile *Lachyn Y Gar* (1807), evoking the Scottish mountain as “one of the most sublime, and picturesque, amongst our Caledonian Alps”,²³ effectively applies to a set of pastoral tropes. In being described as “dark”, “dusky”, “afar”, “wild and majestic”, “steep”, “frowning”, featuring “caves” and “white summits” around which “elements war” and “stormy mist gathers” (ibid), the Scottish “craggs” are obviously seen from a safe distance. Moreover, they are evoked with the “shades of the dead”, whose voices “rise on the night-rolling breath of a gale” (ibid). However, those horrors are kept at bay since the poet views them from its lower valleys, and walks through “the pine-cover’d glade” rather than climbing the pinnacles (ibid). A similar attitude is espoused in Classical poetry, where neither Greek nor Latin poets venture anywhere near the mountain tops, as explained in the Introduction.

The economy of Ancient Greece was Eastbound, and its commerce depended on the sea. In contrast to the sea, mountains were neither explored nor crossed on a regular basis. Instead, they were the far end of man’s world, imagined as the sites inhabited by gods and described either as the limit of a pleasing panorama, or personified as Titans and giants. In the first case, they featured within the writer’s gaze as far-off, snow-clad peaks with interchangeable mythic names. Thus, Sophocles sings of “our white Colonus, where the nightingale, a constant guest, trills her clear note in the cover of green glaze, dwelling amid the wine-dark ivy and the god’s inviolate bowers, rich in berries and fruit unvexed by wind of any storm; where the reveller Dionysus ever walks the ground, companion of the nymphs that nursed him” (*Oedipus on Colonus* 668-680) – arguably from a far distance. In Theocritus, we find the love-lorn Daphnis “wasting like a streak of snow neath the ridge of Haimos, / Or Rhodope, or Athos, of far-off Caucasus” (*Idyll VII*). Euripides evokes the far-off “Parnassus’ summits bright, / Pathless peaks, by day-break lit” (*Ion* 86-87). In Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the mountains are equally described from a distance.²⁴ Alternatively, mountains were suggested and/or personified as the children of earth. Thus Hesiod: “[Gaia] gave birth to

²³ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “Lachyn Y Gar”, *CPWI*, pp. 103-104 (p. 103).

²⁴ E.g. “Zeus the lord of lightning moves from a craggy mountain ridge a storm cloud massing dense and all the lookout peaks stand out and the jutting cliffs abd the steep ravines and down from the high heavens bursts the boundless bright air” (*Iliad* XVI: 349-353). Also: “(...) Olympus, where, they say, the gods’ eternal mansion stands unmoved, never rocked by galewinds, never drenched by rains, nor do the drifting snows assail it, no, the clear air stretches away without a cloud, and a great radiance plays across that world where the blithe gods live all their days in bliss” (*Odyssey* VI: 45-51).

the tall mountains, enchanting haunts / of the divine nymphs who dwell in the woodlands” (*Theogony* 129-130), conflating the notion of mountains with that of Titans, who often bore the same name (e.g. Atlas, the brother of Prometheus). Pindar conflates the names of mountains with that of Pleiades, who were also epitomized by the Titans (*Nemean Ode* II, str. 3). Mountains are further personified as mindlessly destructive giants. Thus Pindar’s personification of Aetna (*Pythian Ode* I, ep. 1, str. 2) and Aeschylus’ use of the giant Typhon as the elemental force in charge of Aetna’s eruptions (*Prometheus Bound* 334-365). The Greeks saw nature as inanimate matter manipulated by the divinities typically evoked as old and brutish, whereby symbolically pre-Olympian. However, the Olympians controlled those brute elemental forces from the outer space. Thus Homer’s description of the “Battle of Gods”, where Poseidon causes an earthquake which shakes both Olympus and Hades and the underworld (*Iliad* XX: 61-65), a Classical paradigm of divine wilfulness over Earth subsequently used by Longinus as an example of rhetoric sublime.²⁵

Arguing that “it is from nature that man derives the faculty of speech” (36: 3), Longinus presents the Classical tropes referring to “Nature” as examples of the most effective rhetoric. However, in seeking to imitate “natural” speech and manner, the rhetoric of the sublime is highly artful, creating an impression of irregularity and asymmetry by the means of asyndeton, repetition, hyperbaton, inversion, broken sentences, the contraction of the plural into the singular, hyperbolic comparisons, and even what appears to be blunders - all aiming to create sudden breaks from the ordinary in order to keep the audience in thrall. Thus, “nature” is not imitated but constructed from linguistic tropes and figures. In contrast to the plastic arts which should aim for a close resemblance to humanity, Longinus asserts that literature should transcend it (36: 3-4). Thus, the sublime can be seen as transgressive of Ancient Greek ethics in going against the grain of Classical rules (i.e. symmetry and plausibility) and in seeking to describe what approximates to the divine, which was typically forbidden, as in the case of the Eleusinian Mysteries, discussed in the previous chapter. In a parallel with Pausanias, Longinus looks back to Ancient Greek past to create an elusive, exclusive frame of unsurpassed (Greek) rhetorics, occasionally matched by only two foreigners, the Roman Cicero and the unknown author of the Bible’s Book of Laws, and only on the grounds of their respective parallels with Demosthenes and Homer. In contrast to

²⁵ See Longinus, *On the Sublime*, ed. Andrew Lang, transl. H. L. Havell (London and New York: Macmillan and Co, 1890): 6-8. Henceforth Longinus.

Pausanias, who apparently erases a Roman present by narrowing his focus on Ancient Greek ruins, Longinus uses the civic system of a contemporary Roman Empire to span his Graeco-centric premise of effective speech across the Greek borders. Thus, the sweeping fluency of efficient rhetorics, whose tropes were canonized by Ancient Greek writers, is compared with the great waters within a broader scope of reference, namely “the Nile, the Danube, the Rhine, and far beyond all the Ocean” (35: 4). In effect, Longinus offers an example of how to expand the Greek imaginary by displacing it onto a North-Western European landscape, and how to evoke and experience “Nature” by means of previously established Greek literary tropes and figures of speech. This practice was followed by gentlemen travellers on their Continental Tours, as discussed in the Introduction. As will be shown in the following section, Byron selectively singled out those elements in a factual Greek landscape which he could identify with the Classical tropes from his primers, and which formed part of a Western-European literary tradition in presenting the imaginary substitute for “Nature” (the Real). While the four Cantos of *CHP* offer a series of reflections on the landscape spreading out in the legacy of a North-Western European (and Byron’s own) Greek imaginary, *Manfred* “repackages” those reflections by giving separate voices to the Promethean / Socratic hero, the spirits of nature, their supervisors from higher spaces, the shadows of the departed, the *phantasmaton* of the *Kalon*. In order to be able to retrace this landscape, let us embark on a short journey through Byron’s Greek landscape, and understand its complexities.

BYRON’S GREEK LANDSCAPE

Despite Byron’s reliance on Classical tropes, Stephen Minta indicates that “Byron’s Greece was neither the museum of the antiquarian nor the portrait of a pastoral imagination (Minta, 70). Byron’s originality in his approach to the Greek landscape consisted not by introducing new tropes but by combining and distributing them in a new way, suggesting a missing Greek imaginary in such a way as to reinvent it. In contrast to the (mere) “Classical” sights frequented by English Philhellenes, Byron’s Greek Orientalism, consisting in his socializing with contemporary Greeks and Albanians as well as in his studies in the Romaic Greek language and literature, enabled him to delve more deeply into the supposed “Real” behind the mere linguistics of

Classical tropes.²⁶ By and large, Byron's inner Greek landscape was conflated during his initial three months in Greece (September - December 1809). The impressions from his initial tour through Continental Greece formed the antitype for his Greek imaginary owing to the fact that he had never before, nor ever afterwards, toured from place to place so fast, so often, and so extensively. In contrast to his mental mobility, Byron only reluctantly moved from place to place (Minta, 69-70, 120). In proof, in a letter to his mother from Patras (30 July 1810), Byron stated that he had already

seen enough, the greater part of Greece is already my own, so that I shall only go over my old ground, and look upon my old seas and mountains, the only acquaintances I ever know improve upon me (*BLJ* II, 9).

This letter gives us exactly what Byron's Greek landscape comprised: the Classical tropes referring to Greece, aptly metaphorized as "old seas and mountains", and the "old ground" of Ancient Greece (comprising Classical Asia Minor), parts of which he revisited (e.g. Zitza, Delvinachi, Libochavo, Ioannina, Prevesa, Nicopolis, the Ambracian Gulf, Messolonghi and Patras), all of them stations of his initial route while on his diplomatic mission to and from Tepelene. However, the narrowest choice of Continental Greece was that of Acarnania, Epirus and *Stereia Ellada*, namely parts of the Ambracian Gulf, the mountains Pindus, Parnassus, Helicon, and the site of Ancient Thebes, where the Gothic ruins coexisted with prehistoric sites of Bacchic rites. The impressions of those sightings will be recycled in *CHP* I-II, the *Oriental Tales*, and most comprehensively and intriguingly, in *Manfred*.

i. Oriental Greece

Remarking on "the Herds of goats a principal feature in Grecian landscape", Hobhouse corroborates his impression with a Classical citation: "*Vite caper morsae Bacchi mactandus (venit Hesper ite capella)*" (Hobhouse 1809, 70), paraphrasing the end of Virgil's *Eclogue X* in a happy reassessment of the contemporary Epirotic landscape as

²⁶ While Byron's (Phil)Hellenism was gentlemanly, his Orientalism was omnivorous, treating the testimonies of his dragomans, their servant sweethearts and his local (boy)friends as seriously as those of Romaic scriptural writings and translations from the Italian, or the testimonies of his European predecessors (e.g. Leake and Pouqueville). Complementing the Enlightened approach of Jones, this sort of on-the-spot Orientalism created the necessary conditions for the completion of Byron's Greek imaginary.

properly “Grecian”. Byron, for his part, espouses a different attitude in glossing the stanza evoking the “monastic Zitza” (*CHP* II: xlviii) thus:

In the valley the river Kalamas (once the Acheron) flows, and, not far from there, forms a fine cataract. The situation is perhaps the finest in Greece, though the approach to Delvinachi and parts of Acarnania and Aetolia may contest the palm. Delphi, Parnassus and, in Attica, even Cape Colonna and Port Raphti, are very inferior, as also every scene in Ionia, or the Troad; I am almost inclined to add the approach to Constantinople; but from the different features of the last, a comparison can hardly be made (*CPW* II, 195).

Apparently, Byron wants to test a set of pastoral (Classical) tropes, typically featuring mountains, cloven rocks, hills, woods, vineyards, valleys, winding rivers and cataracts, on a much broader realm, that of Hellenistic Greece, which anticipated the Ottoman Empire by being inclusive of the Oriental realms ranging from Egypt to India. In Note 11 to *CHP* II: xxxviii, Byron again contrasts the life of the Oriental part of Greek landscape with the sepulchral legacy of Classical Greece, apparently giving the wild, primitive and contemporary landscape preference over the remains of a ruined past civilization, bewailed in the text of the poem, by stating that “no pencil can ever do justice to the scenery in the vicinity of Zitza and Delvinachi, the frontier village of Epirus and Albania proper” (*CPW* II, 192). Moreover, this other-than-Classical landscape was associated with all sorts of dangers. Objectively, the ascent to Delvinachi was a steep, strenuous and perilous path to precipitous “chasms” and falling rocks. From the picturesque perspective, the presence of Arnaout shepherds on the Classical site of Thermopylae provided a contrast to “a pleasing picture of an Arcadian romance”, since “these tremendous-looking fellows”

had each of them pistols and a large knife stuck in their belts; their heads were covered, and their faces partly shaded, by the peaked hoods of their shaggy capotes; and leaning on their long guns, they stared eagerly at the Franks and the umbrellas, with which they were, probably, as much taken as we with their uncouth and ferocious appearance (*Travels* I, 40).

Still, the danger, as well as “the uncouth and ferocious”, were safely kept at bay, since the brigand-shepherds and mountains were at a distance, rigorously kept by the squadron of Ali Pasha’s men who travelled with Byron and Hobhouse. This agreeable distance facilitated a later projection of one picturesque landscape onto another, when Byron continued the survey of “his” Continental legacy.²⁷

²⁷ Thus, while travelling through southern Germany in 1816, Byron was again reminded of “the valley which leads from Delvinachi – by Libochabo and Argyrocastro (on the opposite mountains) to Tepaleni –

On 11 October 1809, near the plain of Zitza, Byron and Hobhouse were caught in a deluge “worthy of the Grecian Jove” (*Travels* I, 70), wherein they were separated into two parties, isolated in the wilderness and unaware of each other’s whereabouts. Byron eventually appeared safe and sound, surviving the deluge wrapped up in his thick Albanian *capote* and (allegedly) composing the stanzas that he would later include in the Appendix of *CHP* I-II. Instead of evoking “the Grecian Jove”, those stanzas seem to parody the pastoral *and* the Gothic in the flippantly self-conscious style of his juvenilia (*CPW* I, 275-277).²⁸ Reiterated, the Greek deluge was *not* worthy of a Grecian Jove. In effect, its memory had to be conflated with the impression of a Swiss deluge, witnessed by Byron from the shelter of his room in the Villa Diodati on the bank of Lake Geneva in Switzerland on 13 June 1816 – at which time he might be composing *Manfred*:

And this is in the night: - Most glorious night!
 Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
 A sharer in thy fierce and far delight, -
 A portion of the tempest and of thee!
 How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
 And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
 And now again ’tis black, - and now, the glee
 Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
 As if they did rejoice o’er a young earthquake’s birth
 (*CHP* III: xciii).

Thus, hills, mountains and rain are personified, the hyperbole (“a phosphoric sea”), the polysyndeton (“and now ... and now”) and the hyphens applied according to the “recipe” of Longinus’ (Greek) sublime – the last similar to Byron’s “natural” prose style in letters and journals. Byron additionally glosses the stanza with a proper Greek reference: “I have seen among the Acroceraunian mountain of Chimari several more terrible [storms], but none more beautiful” (*CPW* II, 311). Byron’s impressions of storms and mountain landscapes were conditioned by, and rated by comparison to, his Greek imaginary, their “Gothic” danger and discomfort ignored unless “Classicized” by the Longinian sublime, and by tropes from Greek myth. Many of the elements featuring in the Epirotic landscape, - the picturesque mountains looming in the distance, the ravines, the falling stones, the mythic places associated with supernatural forces, the sites of legendary bloodshed, the reclusive monasteries and the potentially sinister

the last resemblance struck even the learned Fletcher – who seems to thrive upon his present expedition & is full of comparizons & preferences of the present to the last” (*BLJ* V, p. 76).

²⁸ While being comparable on the grounds of their apparent swerve from contemporary history, the pastoral and the Gothic differ in the latter espousing an essentially Christian (Protestant) outlook and moral (e.g. Davison, pp. 51-52),

brigand-soldiers and shepherds, - all these of these motifs credibly anticipate not only the scenery of the *Oriental Tales*, but also what was thus far seen as the “Gothic” landscape of *Manfred*. The conflation of the “Oriental” and the “Gothic” is facilitated by the both terms signifying otherness to the “Classical”, the trope for civilization, law, order, proportion, and for the human collective, as noted in the Introduction. This conflation is evident in Hobhouse’s comparison of the landscape of Loutraki, which he and Byron misspelt as “Utraikee”/ “Utraiky” (Minta, 91), with the scenery of Anne Radcliffe’s Gothic novel, *Mysteries of Udolpho* (*Travels* I, 62). According to Marilyn Butler, Gothic fiction is marked by a set of formulaic motifs, evocative of more primitive historical periods where rational thought was less predominant (Butler 1981, 28). The Gothic focus on the the ritualistic, the formulaic and the generic in many ways parallels the world of oral poetry, myth and prehistoric irrationality, evoked in Homer, Hesiod and Aeschylus.

On the grounds of its mythic, archetypal appeal, for Byron the primitive and uncivilized motifs of contemporary Greece struck a parallel with Homer, in contrast to the scarce ruins, relics and graves of Classical Greece. On the other hand, the Classical mountain of Parnassus had to disappoint, its reality being so long surpassed by its towering literary trope, an Ancient metaphor associated with poetic inspiration, poetry being the earliest religious form known in Greece (Cronin, 139, Minta, 188). Thus, on 6 November 1809, Hobhouse noted in his diary: “Within sight of Parnassus, but ‘with no poetic transport fired’” (Hobhouse 1809, 108).²⁹

ii. Parnassus and the Pythoness

On 16 December 1809, Byron and Hobhouse started their Parnassian climb, heading toward Delphi. Byron’s gloss on the line “the Delphi’s long deserted shrine” evokes the factual site as an ancient graveyard:

Along the path of the mountain, from Chrysso, are the remains of sepulchres hewn in and from the rock: ‘One,’ said the guide, ‘of a king who broke his neck hunting.’ His Majesty had certainly chosen the fittest spot for such an achievement (*CPW* II, 187).

²⁹ According to Hobhouse’s journal, they first saw Parnassus as early as on 23 September 1809, while approaching the Gulf of Corinth, and probably without knowing that they were actually sighting the mythic mountain. Hobhouse noted: “First saw ancient Greece – high mountains due east . . .” (Hobhouse 1809, p. 44). Three days later, he again mentioned “high rocky mountains to the north” (p. 46), not stating his awareness that they were sighting Parnassus.

As Hobhouse wryly put it, “the power of Apollo did not long survive the Grecian confederacy to which it had owed its importance” (*Travels* I, 207).³⁰ In a parallel with Hobhouse’s above use of Delphi as a trope of Greek political and cultural influence, Byron uses the name of the Greek solar god Apollo, as well as that of the nine Muses, as the emblem of Ancient Greece (*CHP* I: lxii):

Though here no more Apollo haunts his grot,
And thou, the Muses’ seat, art now their grave,
Some gentle Spirit still pervades the spot,
Sighs in the gale, keeps silence in the cave,
And glides with glassy foot o’er yon melodious Wave
(634-638).

The Greek tropes used in the above stanza anticipate those in *Manfred*, where they seem recycled in the “voices” of elemental Spirits approximating to “sweet and melancholy sounds, / As music on the waters” (I.i: 176-177), while the three Destinies “nightly tread / and leave no traces” on snow (II.iii: 3-4), and “skim” ... “the glassy ocean of the mountain ice” (4-5). The real power, pertaining to “some gentle spirit”, is not visible, but felt – and occasionally *heard*. Even if “keeping silence”, the spirit of poetry is still there, speaking through the elements of nature: wind (“gale”), earth (“cave”) and water (“wave”). The gentle spirit of poetry seems to “glide with glassy foot” alongside Byron’s pilgrim. Alternatively, we can call this gentle spirit of poetry, Byron’s Greek imaginary, or the “air of Greece” amounting to poetic gift. In *Manfred*, the spirit of poetry is epitomised by the Phantom of Astarte, whose voice used to be Manfred’s music and who keeps silent before finally promising Manfred a deliverance from “earthly ills” (II.iv: 151), whereupon vanishing only in order to be evoked as “the sought ‘Kalon,’ found, / And seated in my soul” (III.i: 13-14). Poetry is associated with the divine, and the notion of the Phantom of Astarte is imagined as the spirit of poetry, synonymous with the *Kalon*.

Byron and Hobhouse did not climb to Liakura, the highest peak of Parnassus, and evaded the Corycian Cave, which, in Hobhouse’s words, had once been the site of “mad orgies to Bacchus and Apollo” (*Travels* I, 208).³¹ However, they came in view of

³⁰ In Byron’s time, Delphi was a small mud town with few visible remains. The archeological excavations and the respective restoration of the site took place from 1892 until 1903. See Lance Chilton, Mark Dobin, Nick Edwards, *et al.*, *The Rough Guide to Greece*, 12th edition (New York, London and Delhi: Rough Guides, 2008), p. 290. Henceforth *RG*.

³¹ In the above-cited note to *CHP* II, Byron mentions “the cleft in the rock, with a range of caverns difficult of ascent, and apparently leading to the interior of the mountain; probably to the Corycian

the site of the Pythian cave and the sacred water of the Castalian cataract. Byron's note on the sight is disenchanted: "A little above Castri is a cave, supposed the Pythian, of immense depth; the upper part of it is paved, and now a cow-house" (*CPW* II, 187). However, Manfred's words on his once having "dived ... to the caves of death" (II.ii: 79-80) might have been inspired by Byron's experience of Pythia's cave in Parnassus, which suggested a prehistorical morgue much rather than a mythic sanctuary. According to the belief of Ancient Greeks, Pythia, the highest of all priestesses, had the power to commune with the dead. Thus, the Ancient Greek emblem of the Pythia was the horse's head, which simultaneously epitomized death. While Byron and Hobhouse were sighting the legendary Pythian cave, Hobhouse noted "the carved head of some animal, so much battered as to be scarcely distinguishable, but looking like that of a horse, a well-known sepulchral ornament" (*Travels* I, 201).³² The chasm of Castalia, which separated the two mythical tops of Parnassus, hosted the cataract where Pythia and all Delphian pilgrims had to bathe before approaching Apollo's shrine. The sacred cataract was situated above the Greek monastery on the opposite side of Castri, and below the presently inaccessible Corycian Cave. Here, Byron and Hobhouse were "sprinkled with the spray of the falling stream – here we should have felt the poetic inspiration" (*Travels* I, 203). Evidently, the site fell short of Byron's and Hobhouse's expectations, based on Classical literary tropes. Even so, the tropes of a cascade and a prophetess, or a "witch", were to be revisited on the second stage of Byron's Continental Tour, while in Switzerland. This time, the cascade was much bigger, suggesting a giant female shape, which in return provided the impression expected from the erstwhile Pythian haunt. In *Manfred*, the visual memory of Staubach seems conflated with the imaginary Pythia, whose power to invoke the dead is displaced onto

Cavern mentioned by Pausanias" (*CPW* II, p. 187). The evidence of the ancient mystery rites is still preserved until the present day: "If you look carefully with a torch you can find ancient inscriptions near the entrance; without artificial light you can't see more than 100 m into the chilly, forbidding cavern. By the entrance you'll also notice a rock with a man-made circular indentation – possibly an ancient altar for libations" (*RGG*, pp. 295-196).

³² Despite the horse symbol, which attested to the place having once been the dwelling place of the Pythia, Hobhouse's diary reveals his disappointment with the mythic site. He further describes Pythia's cave as "a small cave with an arched roof, containing three arched sides, over the which are two oval excavations. Over the opposite door is the carved head of some animal, looking like a horse, but much battered. There are also pieces of asbestos in one of the arches. Underneath this cave is a depth [. . .] which my conductor affirmed to be fifty [cubits] at the least – this then may have been throne of the Pythoness, but the very diminutive size of the cave itself is something against such a supposition. The inhabitants of the country, however, believe it to be the sacred spot – for, 'Here', said our guide, 'here the Greeks worshipped in the days of Apollo, the King of this part of Greece'" (Hobhouse 1809, pp. 115-116).

the Witch of the Alps, asked by Manfred to “wake the dead, or lay me low with them” (II.ii: 152). In his *Alpine Journal*, Byron described the Staubach in the following terms:

curving over the rock – like the *tail* of a white horse streaming in the wind – such as it might be conceived would be that of the “*pale* horse” on which *Death* is mounted in the Apocalypse. – It is neither mist nor water but a something between both – it’s [sic] immense height (nine hundred feet) gives it a wave – a curve – a spreading here – a condensation there – wonderful – & indescribable (*BLJ* V, 101).

Thinking metaphorically, Byron associated the shape of waterfall with the feminine, with the horse, and with death, all three conflated in the symbolism of the Pythia. Thus, the site from Byron’s Greek landscape seems effectively recast within a landscape more magnificent in size, reiterated as “The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death, / As told in the Apocalypse” in *Manfred* (II.ii: 7-8). Just as like in the case of the above-evoked “non-Grecian” deluge in Epirus, which had to be displaced onto the Swiss deluge (properly enjoyed from one’s window in Villa Diodati, and not from beneath the shed of one’s lice-filled Albanian capote), the memory of the Pythian rill was subsequently displaced onto a larger scenery, which was closer to the contemporary notion of the divine power, by then epitomized by the Natural (Burkeian) Sublime, discussed in the Introduction. Thus, the Witch of the Alps dwells in a waterfall described as “the sheeted silver’s waving column / O’er the crag’s headlong perpendicular” (II.ii: 3-4), a site more worthy of a pagan priestess than the meagre Castalian spring, flanked by a Christian monastery and supervised by Albanian robbers (*Travels* I, 209), apparently the only thing Byron could remotely associate with “awe and fear” within the actual range of Parnassus.

Another blueprint for what Manfred evokes as “the caves of death” might have been the Grotto of Archidamus near Vari, once the Ancient Anagyrus, a prehistoric site of a Bacchic cult mentioned by Strabo (*Travels* I, 354), speculated to be the most ancient of Greek sanctuaries (ibid, 359). The said “grotto” was a tumulus rather than a cave, with “an entrance, not very easy to find” near the top (ibid, 354). The inside of the sanctuary was elaborately adorned with mysterious ancient scriptures, rudely cut lions’ heads and a headless statue in a chair which, according to Hobhouse, might have represented “Isis, the Egyptian Ceres” (ibid, 356). Byron and Hobhouse explored the site by carrying fir-torches just as if they were embarking on a *telete* of the Greater Eleusinian Mysteries, the site of which they had previously visited and found disappointing (324-329). According to Hobhouse, the petrifications of the tumulus were

in shapes almost as human as the rude pieces of sculpture themselves; and the growing spars and crystals were the admiration of the shepherds, who looked upon the stone as endowed with a principle of animation, forming itself into arched grottoes and couched by the side of pure fountains, at the command and for the gratification of the Nymphs. The pious rustic conceived that he had witnessed the handiwork, or perhaps the persons, of the deities of the woods, in their most favourite recesses; and a wish to conciliate their favour, or avert their wrath, prompted him to improve their habitation (357).

In contrast to Hobhouse, Byron's letters and journals reveal no impressions from this excursion. However, in a mind attuned with Ancient Greek philosophy, the play of light from the fir-torches upon those humanoid petrifications might have inspired recollections of Plato's allegory of the cave, the context and cultural reference of which was discussed in the previous chapter.³³ Indeed, the illusion of light on suggestive natural shapes is used in *Manfred*. Manfred haunts the sites in nature in order to gain access to their guardian spirits and prophetic nymphs. In the passage quoted above, Hobhouse makes another highly revealing remark, referring to the "principle of animation" somehow associated with the proximity of "pure fountains" and of nymphs, who for their part want to command and be gratified by mortals. In *Manfred*, the principle of animation is symbolized by the hero's gesture of flinging a handful of water into the air at the hour when the sun forms the iris on the surface of the Staubach waterfall. The Witch of the Alps is an entity conjured by a trick of the light on water (II.ii: 12-13). I have already suggested that the waterfall in "a lower Valley of the Alps" is a revision of the Classical sublime, the Pythian spring sighted in Delphi. Evoked as, "the Spirit of the place" with whom Manfred wants to "divide the homage of these waters" (II.ii: 11-12), the Witch of the Alps additionally substitutes for Ancient Greek nymphs. At first, Byron / Manfred sees the cataract come alive, first as "the Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death, / As told in the Apocalypse" (II.ii: 7-8), evoking the Pythia, who might be able to help him commune with the dead. Immediately afterwards, he is rewarded with a vision a beautiful and gigantic female (non-human) shape:

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
The charms of Earth's least-mortal daughters grow
To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements;
(II.ii: 13-17).

³³ In *Heaven and Earth* (1821), Japhet resorts to a "a Cavern" within Mount Ararat, where he meets a group of malicious spirits (iii: 55-271). See George Gordon, Lord Byron, "Heaven and Earth, A Mystery", *CPW* VI, pp. 346-381 (pp. 356-362).

Thus, Byron magnifies the Pythia to the size of a prophetic nymph who rises beneath the arch of the sunbow of the torrent, just as the Greek priestess was supposed to have appeared beneath the arch of the Castalian spring, which facilitated the flow of her prophecies. But to return to Byron's and Hobhouse's initial explorations of the Ottoman Greece.

iii. Ancient sun-worship

While on Parnassus, Byron and Hobhouse could only sight the two sacred pinnacles from the valley of the Ancient river Pleistus (contemporary Xeropotamos), owing to the danger of robbers. Making the best of their limitations, they contemplated a lovely sunset from their vantage point, with Hobhouse commenting on how the selfsame pleasure in contemplating the sunlit mountain tops must have been shared by "the ancient Greek traveller", who similarly dared not approach the mountain tops, albeit for a different reason. Namely, the Ancient Greek believed those pinnacles to be "the favoured mansion of his gods, and the centre of the universe, and from this position saw the rocky summit rising in a blaze of light into the clouds", whereupon he "must have been agitated by a mingled commotion of piety and fear" (*Travels* I, 210). In contrast to Hobhouse, Byron's response to the impression of the "Grecian" sunset was more religious, as shown in the lines written for *The Curse of Minerva*, begun in March 1811 and completed in November 1811, upon Byron's return to England. After deciding to cancel the fifth edition of *EBSR*, which also featured *The Curse of Minerva*, Byron excerpted the lines evoking a "Classical" Greek sunset to reuse them in Canto III of *The Corsair* (1814). In the following lines, the sun setting on a Classical Greece is conflated with Socrates' death:

On such an Eve, his palest beam he cast
When, Athens! here thy wisest looked his last:
How watch'd thy better Sons his farewell ray,
That clos'd the murder'd Sage's latest day!
Not yet – not yet – Sol pauses on the hill,
The precious hour of parting lingers still;
But sad his light on agonizing eyes,
And dark the mountain's once delightful dyes:
Gloom o'er the lovely land he seems to pour,
The land where Phoebus never frown'd before;
But ere he sunk below Cithaeron's head
The cup of Woe was quaff'd – the spirit fled;

The Soul of Him, that scorn'd to fear or fly,
Who liv'd and died, as none can live or die
(*The Curse of Minerva* 19-32).³⁴

The idea of a “dying sage” ... “who liv'd and died, as none can live or die” and who pays respect to the setting sun is reiterated in *Manfred*'s lines to the “Glorious Orb”, spoken at the sunset of the hero's last day on Earth:

Glorious Orb! the idol
Of early nature, and the vigorous race
Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons
Of the embrace of angels, with a sex
More beautiful than they, which did draw down
The erring spirits who can ne'er return. –
Most glorious orb! that wert a worship, ere
The mystery of thy making was reveal'd!
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops, the hearts
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd
Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!
And representative of the Unknown –
Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou chief star!
Centre of many stars! which mak'st our earth
Endurable, and temperest the hues
And hearts of all who walk within thy rays!
Sire of seasons! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! for near or far,
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee,
Even as our outward aspects; - thou dost rise,
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!
I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance
Of love and wonder was for thee, then take
My latest look: thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been
Of a more fatal nature. He is gone:
I follow
(III.iii: 3-30).

According to McGann, the above cited lines to the sun from *The Curse of Minerva* present the earliest version of the poem, together with the subsequent lines to the moon (44-42), which were written as a separate section (*CPW* I, 446). In a much later parallel, the dying Manfred pays respect to the sun and the moon in two distinct addresses, voiced in the two separate scenes of Act III.³⁵ Anticipating Manfred, Socrates is

³⁴ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “The Curse of Minerva”, *CPW* I, pp. 320-330 (pp. 320-321).

³⁵ The solemn admiration of the last sunset in one's life, extolled in the *The Curse of Minerva* and *Manfred* will be reiterated by yet another sage Greek, the Ionian slave Myrrha, in *Sardanapalus* (1821):

reported to have addressed a prayer to the sun at sunrise (*Symposium* 220 d), since he attributed the sun cult to “the earliest people in Greece” (*Cratylus* 397 c - d), according to which beliefs he finally stated that he acknowledged, “with the rest of mankind, that the sun and the moon are gods” (*Republic* 508 a, *Defence* 26 d). Moreover, Manfred’s notion of the sun making life on Earth enduring, and tempering the hues of its inhabitants with its tints is evocative of the “*harmonia* of the seasons” determined by the course of the sun, stated in Pythagoras, Empedocles and Aristotle (Kingsley, 249).³⁶ Many amongst Ancient Greek scholars and philosophers doubled as magi, most notably Pythagoras and Iamblichus. Hence the concept of Manfred’s “sciences untaught” and the play’s “mixed mythology” – mixed not so much on the grounds of its sources, which could be termed Classical on the grounds of Greek appropriation of Oriental myth. On the contrary, *Manfred*’s mythology offers a “mixed” moral message, since all spiritual entities espouse a moral ambivalence typical for pagan myth yet alien to Christian literature, which is in return juxtaposed with the former (e.g. by means of the figure of Abbot).

The Curse of Minerva and *Manfred* seem to recycle the same set of Greek references, determined by Greek landscape, philosophy and religion.³⁷ However, some motifs in *Manfred* were anticipated by Byron’s *The Prayer of Nature*, written in Newstead on 29 December 1806:

Father of Light! great God of Heaven!
Hear'st thou the accents of despair?

BALEA. You muse right calmly: and can you so watch
The sunrise which may be our last?

MYRRHA. It is
Therefore that I so watch it, and reproach
Those eyes, which never may behold it more,
For having look'd upon it oft, too oft,
Without the reverence and the rapture due
To that which keeps all earth from being as fragile
As I am in this form. Come, look upon it,
The Chaldee's god, which, when I gaze upon,
I grow almost a convert to your Baal
(V.i: 39-48).

See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “Sardanapalus”, *CPW* VI, pp. 15-128 (p. 110).

³⁶ The proof of a Classical appropriation of Zoroastrianism can be found in Wordsworth, who uses the trope of “Chaldean Shepherds” in *The Excursion* (IV: 694) (Hayden II, p.140). Wordsworth was no Orientalist but a “commoner” with a gentlemanly (Classical) education. Thus, ancient Persian astrologers are conveniently turned into shepherds to better suit the pastoral settings of his poem.

³⁷ The importance of Greek landscape in the context of Byron’s poetic development is evident in the comparison of the above lines from *Manfred* and *The Curse of Minerva* with Byron’s juvenile (Neo-Classical) “Ossian’s Address to the Sun in ‘Carthor’” (1805) (*CPW* I, pp. 4-5).

Can guilt like Man's be e'er forgiven?
 Can vice atone for crimes by prayer?
 Father of Light, on thee I call!
 Thou see'st my soul is dark within;
 Thou who canst mark the sparrow's fall,
 Avert from me the death of sin.
 No shrine I seek, to sects unknown;
 Oh point to me the path of truth!
 Thy dread omnipotence I own;
 Spare, yet amend, the faults of youth.
 Let bigots rear a gloomy fane,
 Let superstition hail the pile,
 Let priests, to spread their sable reign,
 With tales of mystic rites beguile.
 Shall man confine his Maker's sway
 To Gothic domes of mouldering stone?
 Thy Temple is the face of day;
 Earth, ocean, heaven thy boundless throne.
 Shall man condemn his race to hell
 Unless they bend in pompous form;
 Tell us that all, for one who fell,
 Must perish in the mingling storm?
 Shall each pretend to reach the skies,
 Yet doom his brother to expire,
 Whose soul a different hope supplies,
 Or doctrine less severe inspire;
 Shall these, by creeds they can't expound,
 Prepare a fancied bliss or woe;
 Shall reptiles, groveling on the ground,
 Their great Creator's purpose know;
 Shall these, who live for self alone,
 Whose years fleet on in daily crime,
 Shall they by Faith for guilt atone,
 Exist beyond the Bounds of Time?
 Father! no prophet's laws I seek, -
Thy laws in Nature's works appear; -
 I own myself corrupt and weak
 Yet will I pray, for thou wilt hear!
 Thou, who can'st guide the wandering star
 Through trackless realms of aether's space;
 Who calm'st the elemental war,
 Whose Hand from pole to pole I trace: -
 Thou, who in wisdom placed me here,
 Who, when thou wilt, can take me hence,
 Oh! whilst I tread this earthly sphere,
 Extend to me thy wide defence.
 To Thee, my God, to Thee I call!
 Whatever weal or woe betide,
 By thy command I rise or fall,
 In thy protection I confide.

If, when this dust to dust's restored,
 My soul shall float on airy wing,
 How shall thy glorious name adored
 Inspire her feeble voice to sing!
 But, if this fleeting spirit share
 With clay the grave's eternal bed,
 While life yet throbs I raise my prayer,
 Though doom'd no more to quit the dead.
 To Thee I breathe my humble strain,
 Grateful for all thy mercies past,
 My hope, my God, to Thee again,
 This erring life will fly at last
 (CPW I, 28-30).

Here, Byron's "Nature" is vast, abstracted, non-material, the temple of God. The notion of a vast "Nature" being subordinated to even vaster forces from above is sourced in Ancient Greece, as shown in the previous section, discussing the pastoral and the sublime.³⁸ In addition, the poem provides a significant example of Byron's attitude to the "Gothic", seen as dialectically opposed to the "Greek". The "Gothic" is conflated with a "mouldering" Christian civilization, respectively evoked by "bigots", "superstition", "priests", "confinement", "hell" and "pompous form". Byron, for his part, turns away from history by resorting to the prehistoric Greek imaginary, where poetry was a religious tribute offered to various deities of nature supervised by a "heavenly father", epitomized by the solar orb and the thunder. Byron's "Father of light", whose "laws in Nature's work appear" yet who is so much more, "Earth, ocean, heaven" being his "boundless throne", is sublime in the manner of Homer's Poseidon, respectively commended by Longinus, as discussed in the previous section. The above polarity of "Gothic" (Christian) and "Greek" (pagan) is reiterated in *Manfred* within the (mis)communication between Manfred and the Abbot of St. Maurice. When the Abbot urges Manfred to "reconcile thee / With the true church, and through the church to heaven" (III.i: 50-51), Manfred answers: "I shall not choose a mortal / To be my mediator" (III.i: 54-55). The next time the Abbot mentions the word "church" (III.i: 86), Byron employs a brilliant irony in having Manfred bring up one of the most ominous persecutors of early Christianity, the Roman Emperor Lucius Domitius Nero

³⁸ Anticipating *Manfred*, the "fleeting spirit" of the lyric subject hopefully diverges from the "clay's eternal grave". In *Manfred*, the hero bemoans his Promethean spirit being "coop'd in clay", and states that he cannot love nature despite its beauty (I. ii: 7-9). Instead, he haunts natural sites only in order to gain the forbidden knowledge of life and death, and to invoke elemental spirits and gods who rule the material world, thus echoing the notion of Ancient Greek writers.

(III.i: 88-96). His anti-Christian pogrom aside, Nero had a genuine passion for Greek lyric poetry, and elevated the position of Greece within the Roman Empire, going so far as to free Greece from Roman dominion (AD 66), whereupon Greece enjoyed a short spell of political independence until the Emperor Vespasian.³⁹ In effect, Byron's essentially pagan Deism seems to have been fully formed by his Classical intertexts, previous to his Grand Tour, the experience of which served to conflate it with a set of visual impressions, correlative with Classical tropes. This set of Greek interrelations included prehistoric worship, the Bacchic cults, the Socratic creed and the sites of wild nature, all of which would be subsequently adapted in *Manfred*.

iv. Primal curse and nympholepsy

As they progressed from Livadhia to Chaeronea, where the forces of Athenian democracy were felled by the Macedons, and from thence to Thebes, once the home of Dionysus and Heracles, Byron and Hobhouse could not find anything of the Ancient monuments and memorials evoked in Pausanias (Minta, 110-113). Hobhouse noted that all memories of Greek imaginary including "the house of Pindar and Epaminondas, all fled, nothing remaining, except perhaps the fogs, which still seem to hang over the flat lands of Boeotia" (Hobhouse 1809, 124). In effect, Byron and Hobhouse turned from history to myth. Hobhouse's revised travelogue speaks on behalf of their trying to construct a (Classical) something out of nothing by reiterating Pausanias' evocations of various Bacchic cults, such as the Cabirian Mysteries at the site of Thebes (Taylor III, 55-56) and the rites of Trophonius at the site of Livadhia (ibid, 87), the latter held in an artificial tumulus, which enabled the initiate to cast themselves as if descending into the underworld (*Travels* I, 218). Apparently, Byron then began weaving his Greek imaginary from landscape and myth, the various layers of which will be united in *Manfred*.⁴⁰

³⁹ See Caius Suetonius Tranquillus, "Nero" and "Divus Vespasian", *The Twelve Caesars*, transl. Robert Graves. Rev. ed. with introduction and notes J. B. Rives (London and New York: Penguin Classics, 1957), pp. 207-241, pp. 274-287.

⁴⁰ Near Livadhia, Byron and Hobhouse saw the fourteenth-century castle built by the German Templar Rutger von Blum (Roger de Flor), Prince of the Catalan Grand Company (1302-1388), which can still be seen towering above the site of the Cave of Trophonius (*RGG*, p. 284). In his *Travels*, Hobhouse associates the "Latin" ruins with "the latter miseries and degradation of Greece" (p. 219), calling their builders, "barbarians" (ibid). According to Minta, Hobhouse was thus referring to Philip II and his son Alexander, the Northern "barbarians" with regard to the forces of Athenian democracy (Minta, p. 111). However, if we remind ourselves of the original meaning of the term "Gothic", synonymous with "barbarous" as well as "pertaining to the Goths" (McCalman, p. 526), we can understand Hobhouse's

From the village of Arachova, Byron and Hobhouse began their descent into Boeotia until they reached the valley with the mythic “Schist”, the triple crossroad where the fatal meeting of Oedipus and his father took place. According to Meletius, the spot where Laius and his attendant were buried by Damisistratus, King of the Plataeans, was marked by large sepulchral stones. However, Hobhouse cynically observed that “these, if they are still to be seen, escaped my observation” (*Travels* I, 212). Byron seems to have been deeply touched by the myth of the curse on the house of Kadmos, passed down on three respective generations of Theban rulers, as told in the *Thebaid* and reiterated in Sophocles’ *Oedipus in Colonus*, *Antigone* and Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes*, the latter being Byron’s favourite Greek tragedy alongside *Prometheus Bound* and Euripides’ *Medea* (*BLJ* V, 268).⁴¹ The myth of Oedipus and his transgression against his parents and country, followed by self-exile, anticipates the self-exile of the Byronic hero, who, according to the recent study of Deborah Lutz, attempts to escape the law of the father.⁴² According to Lutz, “Byron’s Manfred and the Giaour feel they have profoundly sinned, it doesn’t matter how or why, and they are cursed with the pains of remorse, not only for their crimes but also for their self-inflicted homelessness” (Lutz, 50). Notably, the notion of ancestral curse is defined as vampirism in *The Giaour*:

(Neo-)Classicist attitude better, especially in the light of his subsequent explanation that the foreign chiefs he refers to were indeed Goths. The Catalans, or Armogavares, were the feudal knights of Norman origin who came to Greece from the Iberian peninsula. Owing to their expert training as professional soldiers, and to their international connections with other Templar branches, the Catalans eventually refused to be the vassals of the Byzantine Emperor, and established a feudal sovereignty over Continental Greece. After two centuries of rule, Hobhouse continues, they were displaced by the Florentine Acciajoli dynasty, and finally expelled from Greece by Mahomet the Great (*ibid*). The only traces they left behind were the ruins of their one-time fortresses, typically perched on crags bordering on Ancient sites mentioned in Pausanias. The history of the Catalans, and the fact that the territory of Ancient Greece came to be ruled by a Gothic, or Norman (originally Viking) race incongruent with Greek myth and nature, must have appealed to Byron, whose ancestors were Normans. According to Moore, Byron was “prouder of being a descendant of those Byrons of Normandy, who accompanied William the Conqueror into England, than of having been the author of Childe Harold and Manfred” (*Life*, p.1). In his juvenile poem “On Leaving Newstead Abbey” (1803), Byron evokes his ancestors as “the mail-cover’d Barons, who proudly to battle, / Led their vassals from Europe to Palestine’s plain” (*CPWI*, p. 35). The Order of the Templar Knights was founded and formed from amongst the Crusaders. Thus, the history of the Catalans in Greece, especially the figure of Rutger von Blum of Thebes, a lord of Nordic (Germanic or Viking) race who had conquered Greece, might have been the original blueprint for Manfred, as well as for Harold, conflating the imaginary character of a Norman Templar with that of his imaginary ancestor, who, if indeed a Crusader, might have come in contact with the Order of the Templars.

⁴¹ In *Seven against Thebes*, the two feuding brothers reenact the tragic destinies of Oedipus and Laius. The violent desire for the exclusive possession of the mother is linguistically displaced onto “motherland”, Thebes.

⁴² See Deborah Lutz, *The Dangerous Lover: Gothic Villains, Byronism, and the Nineteenth-Century Seduction Narrative* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2006), p. 59. Henceforth Lutz.

But first, on earth as Vampire sent,
 Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent;
 Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
 And suck the blood of all thy race,
 There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
 At midnight drain the stream of life;
 Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
 Must feed thy livid living corse;
 Thy victims ere they yet expire
 Shall know the daemon for their sire,
 As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
 Thy flowers are wither'd on the stem
 (755-766).⁴³

The above lines of *The Giaour* are glossed by Byron's explanation of the contemporary Greek lore of vampires:

The Vampire superstition is still general in the Levant. Honest Tournefort tells a long story, which Mr. Southey, in the notes on *Thalaba*, quotes about these 'Vroucolochas', as he calls them. The Romaic term is 'Vardoulacha'. I recollect a whole family being terrified by the scream of a child, which they imagined must proceed from such a visitation. The Greeks never mention the word without horror. I find that 'Broucholokas' is an old legitimate Hellenic appellation – at least is so applied in Arsenius, who, according to the Greeks, was after his death animated by the Devil (*CPW* III, 420).⁴⁴

According to the last sentence the contemporary Greek legends, complementing Byron's earlier Classical intertexts, might have anticipated Byron's "Faustian" and "Gothic" intertext. As already noted in the Introduction, the stories of Alexander the Great told in Arrian and Plutarch, both of whom were on Byron's Cambridge reading list, to some extent anticipate subsequent Faustian legends, as recently argued by Arnd Bohm, who traces Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* and Goethe's *Faust* from their Classical original in Plutarch and Lucan (Fitzsimmons 2008, 35).⁴⁵

⁴³ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, "The Giaour, A Fragment of a Turkish Tale", *CPW* III, pp. 39-82 (p. 64).

⁴⁴ According to David Punter and Glennis Byron, Robert Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), Byron's *The Giaour* (1813) and John William Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819) introduced the vampire into English fiction. The entity evoked in Southey and Byron, "the revenant, nosferatu or vrykolakas", was "a shambling, mindless creature" of "peasant stock", featuring in the folklore of Eastern Europe, India, China and Tibet. In contrast, Polidori chose to transform the low-class, anything-but-seductive Oriental revenant into a seductive Western-European aristocrat. See David Punter and Glennis Byron, *The Gothic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 268-269.

⁴⁵ According to Bohm, Alexander the Great was seen as the epitome of *superbia* subsequently epitomized by the Faustian figure. Only in the sixteenth century did Alexander give way to Johannes Faustus, the former subsequently melting into the figure of "Lord Lucifer", while Faustus took up the part of Alexander (ibid, p. 20). This coupling is mirrored in the coupling of Arnold and the Stranger (later Caesar), in Byron's unfinished mystery play *The Deformed Transformed* (1823). See George Gordon Byron, Baron, "The Deformed Transformed; A Drama", *CPW* VI, pp. 517-577.

Since both Byron and Hobhouse had poetic ambitions, they were aware of the proximity of the range of Helicon, the home of the nine Muses and, according to Pausanias, the site where Herodotus wrote his *Works and Days*, and where a festival of Thespian poetry was held (Taylor III, 70-71). Pausanias adorns the site with a conflation of two myths and a historical event where the three mortals, namely Orpheus, Narcissus and Ptolemy II, transgressed against the laws of gods and nature. This conflation seems significant with regard to the motives subsequently featuring in *Manfred*. Pausanias presents Orpheus as a mortal:

The Greeks, indeed, believe many things which are by no means true, and this among the rest, that Orpheus was the son of the Muse Calliope, and not of the Calliope who was the daughter of Pierus; that he allured wild beasts by the melody of his lyre; and that he descended to Hades while alive, for the purpose of requesting the infernal gods to restore him back his wife. But it appears to me, that Orpheus surpassed all the poets that were prior to him in the eloquence of his compositions, and that he acquired great authority in consequence of the general opinion, that he invented the mysteries of the gods, purifications for impious actions, remedies for diseases, and the methods for appeasing the wrath of divinity (ibid).

Thus, Orpheus is a mortal Prometheus, helping humans to access forbidden knowledge until Zeus, associated with lightning and thunder, destroys him “by lightning, on account of having taught things in the mysteries which men were unacquainted with before (ibid, 67-68).⁴⁶ In a parallel, Manfred “champions human fears” (II.ii: 205), has “This cautious feeling for another’s pain” (II.i. 80), and holds “converse with the things /Which are forbidden to the search of man” (III.i: 34-35). Manfred’s end in the discarded Act III parallels that of Pausanias’ Orpheus, his death apparently being caused by “a crash like thunder” (*CPW* IV, 469). Since the reader is not allowed into the tower, but remains outside with the servants, the cause of Manfred’s death is so mysterious as to suggest a (god’s) punishment for his transgressions regarding forbidden knowledge. Moreover, Pausanias tells how Orpheus upon the death of his wife travelled to “an ancient oracle of departed spirits” (Taylor III, 68), in a parallel with the Spartan general Pausanias, who visited the sanctuary of Phygalian Jove to speak to the shadow of Cleonice, as indicated by Manfred (see above). Following the Ancient Greek notion of mountain peaks being inhabited by the Olympians, Manfred transports himself on the imaginary Alpine peak to visit a *sui generis* sanctuary of

⁴⁶ In two other instances, Pausanias presents Prometheus as the founder of the Cabirian Mysteries (along with his son Aetnaeus), and as the inventor of fire, honoured by the Argives under the alternative name of Phoroneus (Taylor III, pp. 55-56, 188).

Nemesis, the Destinies and Arimanes (alias Jove), where Nemesis will “uncharnel” Astarte. In the context of a deceased beloved, who was also their own sister, Narcissus and Ptolemy II are also associated with the Helicon (Taylor III, 70, 72). In Pausanias, Narcissus is said to have had

a sister who perfectly resembled him in her whole form, that her hair and dress were similar to that of Narcissus, and that they used to go out together to hunt. That Narcissus fell in love with this sister; and that she happening to die before him, he used to come to this fountain, in which, where he saw his own shadow, without at the same time perceiving that it was his own, he found some mitigation of the torments of his love, by imagining that it was the image of his sister (ibid, 72).

In a parallel, Manfred suggests Astarte as his twin:

She was like me in lineaments - her eyes,
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;
But soften'd all, and temper'd into beauty;
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
To comprehend the universe:
(II.ii: 105-111).

While Narcissus apparently did not commit incest, Ptolemy II and his sister Arsinoë II married and had children, adopting the custom of the Egyptian ruling dynasties. Following the example of Alexander the Great, they proclaimed themselves, “the sibling gods” (*theoi adelphoi*). As Byron knew from Theocritus, Arsinoë II and her mother Berenice were considered resurrected and immortalized by Aphrodite.⁴⁷ In a parallel, Manfred says to Astarte:

(...) Thou lovedst me
Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were

⁴⁷ Thus Theocritus:

Cypris, child of Dione, thou, so is the story told,
From mortal to immortal Berenike didst thou change,
Bedewing her fair bosom with ambrosial drops divine.
And so for thy delight, O thou of many names and shrines,
Doth Berenike's daughter, Arsinoe (sic), fair as Helen,
With all things lovely adorn the couch whereon Adonis slumbers.

See Theocritus, “The Syracusan Women at the Adonis Festival”, *The Idylls of Theocritus*, transl. R.C. Trevelyan (The Casanova Society, 1925), pp. 49-54 (p. 53). Henceforth *Idylls*. Byron's familiarity with Theocritus' *Idylls* is evident in *Hours of Idleness*, especially in the example of *Damaetas*, written in Harrow in 1807 (*CPW* I, p. 51), which seems to be transposing the shepherd Damoetas from Theocritus' *Idyll VI: Daphnis and Damoetas* in the contemporary Harrow “pastorale”. See George Gordon Byron, Baron, “Damaetas”, *CPW* I, p. 51.

The deadliest of sin to love as we have loved
(II.iv: 121-124).

Within Lutz' contemporary analysis of Manfred, incest is seen as a form of narcissism, "a rebellious doubling of the self in an incestuous self-love (...) the possibility of the lone subject making or breaking meaning itself in the world", a *sui generis* masturbatory phantasy serving to create an illusion of supreme power (Lutz, 64-65). However, Manfred (and Byron) are not the only "onanistic" Romantic heroes, since close ties between siblings of the opposite sex was a characteristic of European artists of the era. In Britain, the most famous brother-sister partnerships were those of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, of Charles and Mary Lamb, of Shelley and his two younger sisters, and of Byron and Augusta Leigh. The trope of sibling love, often expanding to include the love of humanity as a whole, was the Romantic *sine qua non*. Shelley, who used the motif of sibling incest in *The Revolt of Islam*, wrote to Maria Gisborne that incest was "like many other incorrect things, a highly poetic circumstance" (*Letters* II, 749). In a letter to John Galt (13 December 1813), Byron draws on the incest trope in *The Bride of Abydos*, taken from the Western-European literary cannon but based on the Ancient Greeks:

I thought myself two centuries at least too late for the subject [of incest], which, though admitting of very powerful feelings and description, yet is not adapted for this age, at least this country, though the finest works of the Greeks, one of Schiller's and Alfieri's in modern times, beside several of our old (and best) dramatists, have been founded on incidents of a similar cast (*BLJ* III, 196).⁴⁸

When he was eight, Byron was read the the Swiss religious poet Salomon Gessner's epic poem *Death of Abel* (1758) by his Presbyterian tutor in Aberdeen (*CPW* VI, 228). The poem unabashedly presents the first family as incestuous, the two brothers being married to their own sisters. In Gessner, incest does not form part of Cain's sin, which consists of fratricide and disobedience, leading to his loss of home. According to Lutz, homelessness is for Byron a trope for primordial sin (Lutz, 53), which in return

⁴⁸ Apart from Sophocles' *Oedipus*, Alfieri's *Mirra* (1789) also has subject-matter from Greek myth, while Schiller's *The Bride of Messina* (1803) applies the chorus in a similar manner to Aeschylus and Sophocles. For instances where Byron commends and admires Alfieri, see *BLJ* III, pp. 196, 199, 245; *BLJ* VI, pp. 206, 217; *BLJ* VIII, pp. 93, 210. For instances where Byron states that he has followed Alfieri's lead in dramatic composition, see *BLJ* VII, p. 182, and *BLJ* VIII, pp. 152, 218. According to Peter Cochran, Byron saw a kindred spirit in Alfieri in that both composed plays that resisted the expectations of stage performance. See Peter Cochran, "Byron and Alfieri", *Dante and Italy in British Romanticism*, eds. Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglass (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 55-61. The "old and best" British dramatists who tackled the theme of incest were those of the Jacobean period, respectively Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher (*Cupid's Revenge*), John Ford (*'Tis a Pity She's a Whore*) and John Webster (*The Duchess of Malfi*).

comprises incest, the slayer of kin and exile in both Greek and Hebrew myth, respectively, of Oedipus and Cain.

v. The feminine *Kalon*

Drawing on Plato (e.g. *Phaedrus* 238 d), Hobhouse describes the votary of a Bacchic cult as “nympholept” on the grounds of “the excess of his piety, or perhaps his passion” (*Travels* I, 358). By adding that nympholepsy was epidemic amongst the people in the neighbourhood of “a certain cave in Cithaeron” (ibid), Hobhouse again hints at Pausanias, who for his part tells of a cavern on Mount Cithaeron hosting the prophetic nymphs (Taylor III, 8). In *CHP* IV, Byron refers to “the nympholepsy of some fond despair” in the context of Egeria, the spring nymph loved by Numa Pompilius:

Egeria! sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast; whate’er thou art
Or wert, - a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair;
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common votary there
Too much adoring; whatsoe’er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth
(*CHP* IV: cxv).

Anticipated by Manfred’s lines to the Witch of the Alps (see above), and even more by his obsession with Astarte, vanished from the material world yet still existing as a shadow, spirit, or phantom, the above lines clarify the notion of the immortal(ized) beloved who provides Byron’s self-exile (whether Harold, Manfred, or the Giaour) with a sense of “home” (i.e. source, destination, inner peace). Thus, nympholepsy equates to what Lutz calls, “an erotics of homesickness”, whilst “the mark of Cain” equals “the mark of the beloved” (Lutz, 49).⁴⁹ The same yearning for “home” is reiterated in Plato

⁴⁹ According to Butler, “a raging literary fashion for Pan-worship and ‘nympholepsy’” were but one amongst the (pagan Greek) ways in which the second-generation Romantics (i.e. Byron, Shelley, Peacock, Hunt, and Keats) flaunted their ideological opposition to Christian conservatism currently on the rise in England (Butler 1981, p. 131). In further stating that “love for the supernatural being symbolizes the human worship of the ideal and the artist’s love of his creation”, Butler indirectly conflates Byron’s concept of Astarte with the notion of Plato’s *Kalon*. Finally, Butler compares Manfred with Orpheus on the grounds of his invocation of Astarte’s shadow, simultaneously associating Manfred’s relation to Astarte with nympholepsy (ibid, p. 122). In a contrary view, McGann sees Byron’s nympholepsy as “the lost dream of a perfect political order”. See Jerome J. McGann, *Don Juan in Context* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 126. I shall further discuss the shared nympholeptic context of Byron and Shelley in Chapter Three.

as the *eros* (love and desire) for the *Kalon* (the beautiful). (The Phantom of) Astarte is something immaterial. On the other hand, the nympholepsy espoused by the Byronic hero is conditioned on the memory of something long lost and gone, namely the material body of a dead woman. In all four Cantos of *CHP*, Harold evokes a beloved whose body is not available - either because they are dead (Edleston), a sibling (Augusta Leigh), or fictional (Egeria). Similarly, the Giaour, the Corsair, Alp and finally Manfred feel haunted by the absent body of a woman, additionally blaming themselves for its loss. According to a number of contemporary critics, the lost-and-gone body of the beautiful female beloved allegorizes a vanished Ancient Greece.⁵⁰ The *femmes fatales* of Byron's heroes – ranging from Leila, Zuleika, Medora, Gulnare, “Khaled”, Francesca (*Oriental Tales*), Astarte (*Manfred*), Myrrha (*Sardanapalus*) to Haidee, Lola, Katinka, Dudu (*Don Juan*) – can be seen as embedded in the landscape of contemporary (Ottoman) Greece.⁵¹ Whether Frank or Oriental, they are not Classical, since that “honour” belongs to ruined sculptures and Ancient Greek goddesses. Thus, Minerva (*The Curse of Minerva*), the three Destinies and Nemesis (*Manfred*) seem to allegorize the discrepancy between an ideal and a factual notion of just retribution. Their portraits are satirical, while the beloved of the Byronic hero is idyllic, tragic and /or sublime, as we shall see with the example of (the Phantom of) Astarte. The Byronic *femme fatale* is the Oriental other, objectivized by (man-incurred) issues concerning race, class and religion. According to Nigel Leask, “Byron's myth of the Hellenistic source of European civilization” symbolically approximates to the “male” desire for the imaginary at the base of a patriarchal order, where the desire and its object can never be

⁵⁰ Francis Berry indicates that Byron's lifelong “affair with Greece” could not be complete without an imaginary female Greek beloved, whom “no other ... could equal in skill and amorous subtlety” (Raizis 1988, p. 156). Similarly, and regardless of Byron's factual (homo)sexual relations while in Greece, Minta indicates that the three Macri sisters were cast as Oriental odalisques in *Don Juan* under their pet names “Lola” (Teresa) Katinka and “Dudu” (Mariana), thus revealing Byron's earlier sexual fantasies (Minta, p. 122). On Leila as the phantasmagoric allegory of Greece in *The Giaour*, see Brinks, p. 166 n 32, and Gleckner, p. 106. On Byron's usage of the phantasm of a beautiful female corpse as the epitome of Greece, see David E. Roessel, *In Byron's Shadow: Modern Greece in the English and American Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 56. Also Leask, p. 33. Filiz Turhan's study of Byron's usage of “the Turkish female body” in the *Oriental Tales*, (which she calls, “*Turkish Tales*”) disregards the fact that the Ottoman Empire inherited the realm of Hellenistic Greece and the Eastern Roman Empire, as well as the fact that Byron never bothered to take lessons in Turkish (whilst he did take lessons in Arabic, Romaic Greek and Armenian). See Filiz Turhan, “Victim, Vixen, and Virago: The Odalisque in Byron's *Turkish Tales*”, *The Other Empire: British Romantic Writings about the Ottoman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 45-74 (p. 45).

⁵¹ Even if Alp and Francesca (*The Siege of Corinth*) are Venetians, Alp meets with Francesca's shadow in the ruins of an Ancient Greek temple in Corinth, and not in Venice. According to Malcolm Kelsall, Byron (and the Whigs) saw Venice, a maritime oligodemocratic hegemony, as the successor of Classical Greece (Kelsall, pp. 94, 96, 99).

reconciled (Leask, 50). In effect, Byron's contemporary (*quia* Oriental) Greek *femme fatale* reads as the allegory of Byron's Greek imaginary. In a parallel with the latter, the Oriental Greek woman has exchanged her material existence for the immortality of a haunting shadow, whose (re)appearance in return seems conditioned on Classical tropes, pivoting on myth, mountains and ruins. Alternatively, the Oriental Greek can be seen as "Classicized" in being framed within the Platonic intertext. Thus the Giaour, evoking his love for the Oriental Leila:

But Heaven itself descends in love -
A feeling from the Godhead caught,
To wean from self each sordid thought -
A Ray of him who form'd the whole -
A Glory circling round the soul!
(*The Giaour* 1136-1140).

On the grounds of its supreme beauty, the female Oriental Greek body is the mediator for love-as-the *Kalon* (i.e. the true / the good / the beautiful). According to the Giaour, Leila "was my Life's unerring Light / That quenched – what beam shall break my night?" (1145-1146). As in Plato, the sensual/sensory experience is evoked by the image of beauty, which persists in the hero's mind even after the material body has long decomposed. Thus the "phantoms" (*phantasmata*) of Leila, Francesca and Astarte, visions of beautiful female bodies simultaneously evoking the good, the true, the beautiful.⁵² The *phantasmaton* of the beloved female body is a figure for redemption, bringing "a final presentness, a transfiguration, a blessed grace" (Lutz, 51). Nevertheless, Plato cautions that the *phantasmaton* might be an illusion of the senses (e.g. *Timaeus* 71 a, *Phaedrus* 229 e – 230 a, *Sophist* 236 a-c, *Republic* 516 c-d). From Plato, Byron presents Manfred deluded by "a beautiful female figure" assumed (most likely) by the Seventh Spirit, in the instance already noted in Chapter One:

Oh God! if it be thus, and *thou*
Art not a madness and a mockery,
I yet might be most happy. – I will clasp thee,
And we again will be –
(I.i: 188-191).

⁵² In *The Giaour*, Leila's physical beauty inspires men to contemplate eternity, just as in Plato:

Yea, *Soul*, and should our prophet say
That form was nought but breathing clay,
By Alla! I would answer nay;
(480-482).

They cannot “be again”, since they are divided by Manfred’s fleshly existence. Just like the Giaour before him (*The Giaour* 1285-1290), he can only press his hands against his own chest in trying to hug the phantom of the beloved body, now forever lost. Alp’s (*The Siege of Corinth*) and Manfred’s death is announced by the *phantasmata* of their beloved Francesca and Astarte. Since their bodies, like that of Leila, are now lost, their *phantasmata* (in the context of Platonic indeterminacy of a phantom’s nature) suggest that some kind of union might again be established after the hero departs from the world of living.

vi. The brotherhood of vampiric thought

In stating that “the Byronic philosophy sees love as the ultimate, and only, essential truth and final resting place for one in this life”, Lutz reiterates the premises of Plato’s philosophy, espoused in Byron’s best-selling *Oriental Tales* (Lutz, 52). Apart from “the Byronic” (aka Platonic) philosophy of love supreme, the plots involving Byronic heroes also feature the dark motifs of a push-and-pull dynamics suggesting seduction and abandonment, a curse, and an inner hell projected onto the outer world. As indicated above, the mark of Cain seems of Greek provenance, being probably sourced in Byron’s Enlightened (Orientalist) approach to Indo-European mythology and the Bible, wherein the “original sin” was epitomised by a Promethean figure and his human followers, as discussed in the Introduction. Apart from forbidden knowledge, humans in Greek myth and literature occasionally gained sexual access to the divine, as in the case of Odysseus, who in the course of his wanderings became the lover of two (non-Olympian) divinities, the nymph Calypso and the sorceress Circe. In effect, the “Calypso stanzas” (*CHP* II: xxix-xxxv) seem to have been inspired by Byron’s and Hobhouse’s reading of the *Odyssey* while sailing towards Greece (Hobhouse 1809, 48). In the process of leaving Florence, “a new Calypso”, Harold, “a sketch of a modern Timon” (*CPW* II, 6), states that his heart was “wayward”, “loveless” and “worthless” (*CHP* II: xxx).⁵³ Moreover:

⁵³ Timon of Phlius (320-230 BC) was a Greek sceptical (Pyrrhonist) philosopher and writer, best known for a satiric account of the lives of Ancient Greek philosophers written in a series of poems called *Silloi*. According to the Pyrrhonists, man’s opinions or unwarranted judgements about things effectively produce desires, which in return result in painful effort and disappointment. Hence, one should refrain from judging one state of being as preferable to another. While being aware of the absolute uncertainty regarding all around him, a man should follow custom or nature in his everyday life. Timon’s writings

Little knew she that seeming marble-heart,
 Now mask'd in silence or withheld by pride,
 Was not unskill'd in the spoiler's art,
 And spread its snares licentious far and wide;
 Nor from the base pursuit had turn'd aside,
 As long as aught was worthy to pursue:
 (CHP II.xxxiii: 289-294).⁵⁴

Apart from Constance/Calypso, the Classical trope of abandoned (female) beloved is reiterated by “sad Penelope” and “dark Sappho” (CHP II: xxxix), as well as in Medora’s subsequent allusion to Ariadne (*The Corsair* I: 444), abandoned by Theseus and left to die on Naxos.⁵⁵ A series of abandoned female shadows from Greek antiquity, “sensed” by Byron who was reading Homer while sailing past their native shores, might have suggested the words of *The Incantation*, published in a separate volume containing Byron’s short contemporary lyrics (December 1816), before being included in *Manfred*.⁵⁶ In Act I of *Manfred*, the Incantation (I.i: 192-261) is given to “a distant Voice”, who sings the song evoking Manfred’s alleged past transgression - obviously

influenced Sextus Empiricus, who in return influenced Boileau, Hume, and Beyle, all of whom Byron read. Within the context of his philosophical premises, Timon inspired Shakespeare for his drama *Timon of Athens*, which was set in a much earlier historical period, within Classical Athens. See J. Brunschwig, *Papers in Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 212-223.

⁵⁴ Compare with Byron’s juvenile *Damaetas*:

In law an infant, and in years a boy,
 In mind a slave to every vicious joy,
 From every sense of shame and virtue wean'd,
 In lies an adept, in deceit a fiend;
 Vers'd in hypocrisy, while yet a child,
 Fickle as a wind, of inclinations wild;
 Woman his dupe, his heedless friend a tool,
 Old in the world, though scarcely broke from school;
 Damaetas ran through all the maze of sin,
 And found the goal, when others just begin:
 Ev'n still conflicting passions shake his soul,
 And bid him drain the dregs of pleasure's bowl;
 But, pall'd with vice, he breaks his former chain,
 And, what was once his bliss, appears his bane
 (CPW I, pp. 51-52).

⁵⁵ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “The Corsair; A Tale”, *CPW* III, pp. 148-214 (p. 165). The trope of the abandoned Greek female is not only Classical (Sapphic and Homeric), but also indebted to the more recent Oriental lore sung, according to Byron’s note in *The Giaour*, by “the coffee-house story-tellers who abound in the Levant” (*CPW* III, p. 423). While in Ioannina, Byron and Hobhouse learned the story of Phrosyne, a local Greek woman picked up by Ali Pasha’s son, whose jealous wife complained to Ali Pasha, thus causing a pogrom of all good-looking Greek women in the area, who were subsequently sewn into sacks and drowned (*Travels* I, p. 111 n 6). Byron recycled the elements of the local legend in *The Giaour*, wherein we are led to infer that Leila’s (dead) body was put in a sack and dumped in the water.

⁵⁶ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “The Incantation”, *The Prisoner of Chillon and Other Poems* (London: John Murray, 1816), pp. 46-49 (p. 46). Notably, Byron’s epigraph to the poem states that it originally belonged to “an unfinished Witch Drama, which was begun some years ago”.

seduction and abandonment, since he is accused of “false tears” (232), “black blood” (235), a poisoned lip (238-241), a “serpent smile” (242), suggesting an iteration of the above lines from *CHP* II. In the same context, Harold complains of “the demon, Thought” (*CHP* I: 860), offering a parallel with Manfred’s “continuance of enduring thought” (*Manfred* I.i: 4). Within this paradigm, seduction is symbolically approximated to a restless mind. Thus, Harold speaks of “curst Cain’s unresting doom” (*CHP* I: 827) and of an inner hell - “man’s heart, and ... the Hell that’s there” (*CHP* I: 872). In the Incantation, the abandoned female Mediterranean evoked in *CHP* I-II seems to reassert herself thus:

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathom’d gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul’s hypocrisy;
By the perfection of thine art
Which pass’d for human thine own heart;
By thy delight in others’ pain
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!
(I.i: 242-251).

“There are shades which will not vanish, / There are thoughts thou canst not banish” (I.i: 204-205), sings the “Voice” a little earlier, letting us infer that she is none other than Harold’s “demon thought” who turned against her originator and assumed an individual life, acting the vampire’s part in a successive poem, as if following the lines cited from *The Giaour* (see above). On the grounds of once having been the hero’s own creation, the demon thought is in possession of his secret: “In proving every poison known, / I found the strongest was thine own” (240-241):

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O’er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been pass’d – now wither!
(252-261).⁵⁷

⁵⁷ In *The Giaour*, the hero is cursed with a similar “immortality of hell”:

And from its torment ’scape alone

Thus the notion of Ancient Greek curse, an emancipated demon thought, haunting one subsequent hero after another. As if making “good” on *The Giaour*’s curse, Manfred’s “injuries came down on those who loved me – / On those whom I best loved” (II.i: 84-85). In effect, Manfred’s demon thought is a vampire, a *vroukolakas* inherent to himself yet apparently turning against those he loves. Reiterating Harold and the Giaour, similarly followed by the demon thought, Manfred states that his earthly existence prior to finding the *Kalon* used to be

- like the wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone Simoom,
Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps o’er
The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast,
And revels o’er their wild and arid waves,
And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
But being met is deadly;
(III.i: 127-133).

Intellectually superior to his predecessors, Manfred will quench his demon thought by owning his own proper hell (its factual originator) in the process which will claim his material life, as will be shown in Chapter Four.

According to his original plan, Byron’s Grand Tour was meant to take him across the entire realm described in Xenophon’s *Katabasis* and subsequently conquered by Alexander the Great. Despite having obtained the necessary firmans to travel further in the East (*BLJ* II, 38-39, 40, 41), Byron was forced to break up his Levantine Tour because he had run out of funds. He was painfully aware that his Grand Tour had been less than grand, leaving him unfamiliar with the other half of the Western-European Classical legacy, namely that of Ancient Rome. In effect, he stated that he had “neither harp, ‘heart nor voice’” (*BLJ* II, 92) to continue *CHP* I-II, despite its sensational success. In effect, Byron was struck by a creative and existential crisis at the height of his British fame (1813-1815).⁵⁸ During this time, Byron constantly voiced his intention

To wander round lost Eblis’ throne;
And fire unquench’d, unquenchable –
Around – within – thy heart shall dwell,
Nor ear can hear, nor tongue can tell
The tortures of that inward hell! –
(749-754).

⁵⁸ After his Greek experience was immediately recorded in *CHP* I-II, Byron’s inner Greek landscape inspired the composition of *Oriental Tales*. For a detailed study of Byron’s usage of his Greek imaginary in *Oriental Tales*, see Harold M. Spender, *Byron and Greece* (London: John Murray, 1924), and Harold Wiener, “Byron and the East: Literary Sources of the Turkish Tales”, *Nineteenth-Century Studies in Honour of C. S. Northrup*, ed. Herbert Davis (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1940), pp. 89-129.

to return to the Mediterranean, more specifically to Ottoman Greece, to many of his correspondents (e.g. *BLJ* III, 35, 76, 84, 85, 95-96, 99). As early as on 16 February 1812, before he awoke famous, Byron wrote to Hodgson that he intended to “find employment in making myself a good Oriental scholar”:

I shall retain a mansion on one of the fairest islands, and retrace, at intervals, the most interesting portions of the East. In the meantime, I am adjusting my concerns, which will (...) leave me with wealth sufficient even for home, but enough for a principality in Turkey (*BLJ* II, 163).

Apart from supporting Leask’s claim that Byron had a Whig notion of the Orient, which amounted to the Levant (Leask, 4), the above statement shows his simultaneous conflation of the said Orient with a contemporary and Ancient Greece, the latter being epitomized by the islands. In effect, Byron’s Greece appears to be a customized imaginary, balancing yet not quite identifying with either the Classical or its other. Alas, Byron’s lawyer was less that competent in adjusting his client’s business affairs, and Byron could not afford another Continental Tour until the time of his bankruptcy and self-exile. Still, he kept forging plans for a second Continental Tour. In a letter to Hobhouse from 14 September 1814, only a few days after he sent off his marriage proposal to Anabella Millbanke, Byron suggested a continuation of their Grand Tour (*BLJ* IV, 170-171). On 15 September 1814, he wrote to Moore that, in the case Anabella should turn him down, he would be off to Italy in the next month: “I want to see Venice, and the Alps, and Parmesan cheeses, and look at the coast of Greece, or rather Epirus, from Italy ... (*BLJ* IV, 172). Byron’s contextual conflation of Venice and Greece is logical in the light of the fact that the Venetian Republic used to rule over the greater part of Greece until the early eighteenth century, effectively imposing Italian as the Greek *lingua franca*, and by the fact that the Republic of Venice presented a historical successor to Classical Athens as an imperialistic maritime city-state ruled by a patrician oligarchy. Within two years from its above-cited proposition, Byron finally embarked on the second stage of his Continental Tour. It was heralded by bankruptcy and public scandal, following an unwise marriage and a scandalous separation which seriously damaged the reputations of both Byron and his half-sister, Augusta Leigh.

CHAPTER THREE: BYRON'S CONTINENTAL TOUR

In April 1816, subsequent to his abandonment of Britain, Byron embarked on a second stage of his Continental Tour. At first, his travelling companion was not Hobhouse, who was to join him in Switzerland in the second part of 1816, but a hired private physician, Dr John William Polidori (1795-1821), then aged twenty. Polidori's medical uses to Byron were later dismissed thus: "I was in a wretched state of health and worse spirits when I was at Geneva; but quiet and the lake, better physicians than Polidori, soon set me up" (Galt, 209). In an indirect manner, Polidori did provide a means for the improvement of Byron's mental balance. Namely, he showed his patron the recent issue of the *Pamphleteer*, which contained his literary debut, the essay called, "On the Punishment of Death", as well as the second revised edition of Thomas Taylor's *A Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries* (1792). Apparently, Byron snatched the *Pamphleteer* from Polidori, devouring and completely absorbing the argument of Taylor's *Dissertation* before they embarked on their ship in Dover (16 April 1816). Byron's intertext of Taylor's *Dissertation* is attested by a short lyric *Churchill's Grave, a Fact Literally Rendered*, written on 15 April 1816 upon visiting the grave of the radical Whig satirist Charles Churchill (1732-1764), a friend of John Wilkes and one of the Medmenham "monks" (Sainsbury, 107). The following lines of the poem,

The Architect of all on which we tread,
For Earth is but a tombstone, did essay,
To extricate remembrance from the clay,
Whose mingling might confuse a Newton's thought,
Were it not that all life must end in one,
Of which we are but dreamers;
(20-25),¹

suggest the proximity of a new Neo-Platonist intertext, revising the Socratic premises Byron had ingested in Harrow. These lines credibly anticipate Manfred's "half dust half deity" paradigm, the sense of his "Promethean spark" being "coop'd in clay" and of being "his soul's sepulchre". All those notions were to be found in Taylor's *Dissertation*, aiming to show how an allegorical reading of Greek myth can contribute to personal healing and illumination. Subsequent to devouring Taylor's *Dissertation*, Byron requested Taylor's Pausanias from Hobhouse in a letter from Brussels (1 May

¹ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, "Churchill's Grave, a Fact Literally Rendered", *CPW* IV, pp. 1-2 (p. 2).

1816) and from Evian (23 June 1816), while already on his Lake tour with Shelley (*BLJ* V, 74, 80).

TAYLOR'S *DISSERTATION*

From Taylor's Pausanias, Byron might have remembered the passage asserting that the Eleusinian and Bacchic mysteries revolved around love, celebrated as the strongest cosmic force (Taylor III, 59). Apart from being compatible with what Lutz calls, "the Byronic philosophy" (Lutz, 52), this glorification of love seems to build on the Enlightened use of myth. In sourcing all Indo-European myth in the rites of fertility and rebirth (*quia* sexuality), the Enlightened scholars such as Richard Payne Knight, Erasmus Darwin, and their French predecessors Constantin Volney and Charles Dupuis went against the grain of conventional Christianity, the proponents of which regarded them as Jacobins on the grounds of their essential scepticism.² Taylor, for his part, was remarkably scathing towards Christian priests.³ He tends to intellectualize *eros* in a manner familiar with Byron's conflation of seduction and thought, mentioned in the example from *CHP* II in the previous chapter, by means of an allegorical approach to Greek myth.

Even if inherently pagan, Taylor's *Dissertation* partly voices some of the most notorious Calvinist premises in asserting that the reprobate soul inhabits bodies physically or mentally deformed, and that those capable of reading myth allegorically are intellectually predestined. Apart from embracing Taylor's paradigm of an allegorical approach to myth as a means to personal salvation, Byron apparently felt inspired by Taylor's "Calvinist" element. This inspiration was based on his deep animus towards Calvinism, which does not appear to derive from existential fear, nor any sort of indoctrination. Arguably, Byron's (low-class) Presbyterian influences were checked by a new class distinction, upon his inheriting the baronetcy (*vide* Barton, 22-

² On the Enlightened approach to mythology, see McCalman, p. 339. Also Butler 1981, pp. 129 -131.

³ Thus Taylor: "Indeed the sophistry throughout [Bishop Warburton's] whole treatise is perpetual, and everywhere exhibits to our view the leading features of a Christian priest in complete perfection; I mean consummate arrogance, united with a profound ignorance of antient (sic) wisdom, and blended with matchless hypocrisy and fraud. For, indeed, from the earliest of the fathers, down to the most modern and vile plebeian teacher among the Methodists, the same character displays itself, and is alike productive of the same deplorable mischief to the real welfare of mankind. But it is necessary that impiety should sometimes prevail on the earth; though at the same time, it is no less necessary that its consequent maladies should be lamented and strenuously resisted by every genuine lover of virtue and truth." See Thomas Taylor, *A Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries* (Amsterdam: J. Weiststein, 1792), p. 64. Henceforth Taylor 1792.

23, and Hopps and Stabler, 109-110). In addition, Byron's Harrow teachers were notably Deist and his early passion for Greek scepticism, discussed in Chapter One, left little place for religious bias and dogma of any sort.⁴ In an early letter to Edward Noel Long from Southwell (16 April 1807), Byron declares himself as a Deist:

This much I will venture to affirm, that all the virtues and pious *Deeds* performed on Earth can never – entitle a man to Everlasting happiness in a future State; nor on the other hand can such a Scene as a Seat of eternal punishment exist, it is incompatible with the benign attributes of a Deity to suppose so; (...) I have lived a *Deist*, what I shall die I know not – however come what may, “*ridens moriar*” (*BLJ* I, 114-115).

Thus, Byron is repudiating Calvinist predestination and reprobation from an Enlightened Deist perspective. The moral of the above letter seems reiterated in *Manfred*, which was in return inspired by Taylor's *Dissertation*, apparently espousing a notion of eternal damnation in a parallel with Calvinism, yet also offering a means to its absolute vanquishment given his reading of Plato and Greek myth. In the process, Taylor's argument on the soul's journey from a flesh-encased darkness towards the light presents physical death as a *sui generis* parallel to spiritual illumination. There is ample evidence that Byron was preoccupied with a possibility of the death of one's former self and a subsequent inner renewal during his time in Switzerland.⁵ In his subsequent recollections of that period, he half-jestingly admitted to Thomas Moore (28 January 1817) that he was then in a deep personal crisis, “half mad” and suicidal:

⁴ While Paul Barton argues that Byron was indoctrinated by Calvinism from all sides and throughout his life, Christine Kenyon-Jones indicates that Byron was “a moderate Presbyterian” at his most facetious, and that the myth of Byron's alleged Calvinist paranoia was propagated by his estranged wife (Hopps and Stabler, p. 187). According to McGann, Byron in the period following 1816 used Calvinism as a synecdoche for all conventionally Christian Britons who attacked him on the grounds of his liberal views and scepticism (McGann 1968, pp. 247-251). However, it is far more feasible to view Byron's animus towards Calvinist predestination and reprobation in the context of his Whig outlook. Since the Whigs saw themselves as the guardians of human freedom, Byron probably took issue with Calvinism on the grounds of the Whig-based notion of free, democratic thought as a rightful (Greek-based) legacy, as well as on the grounds of feeling a patrician responsibility to represent and civilize their (low-born) fellow-men by freeing them from morbid superstition (e.g. Mitchell, pp. 121-134).

⁵ This preoccupation is documented in *CHP* III. lxxiii:

I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to Sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling
(690-698).

I was half mad during the time of [*CHP* III's] composition, between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love unextinguishable, thoughts unutterable, and the nightmare of my own delinquencies. I should, many a good day, have blown my brains out, but for the recollection that it would have given pleasure to my mother-in-law (*BLJ* V, 165).

Byron's inner state was belied by an active social life, and an overflow of poetic composition, the latter being as therapeutic as was his reading of Taylor's *Dissertation*. Significantly, Taylor might have provided Byron with a creative and speculative solution to the problems of madness and suicide. According to Taylor, madness, described as *discordia demens* in Virgil and as "mad discord" (*keinei mainomeno*) in Empedocles, indicates the soul's reprobate state. The worst cases of reprobation are, respectively, that of physical deformation, of infant deaths, and of suicides (Taylor 1792, 27-28). The notion of reprobation and predestination is further proposed by Taylor's elitist paradigm of intellectual development. Within Taylor's reading of the *Aeneid*'s infernal realms and the three groups of souls deemed "guilty without guilt" (i.e. infants, suicides, and the unjustly condemned), the infants are reprobate on the grounds of non-existent intellect. Being overly connected with material nature, they can be nothing but condemned. The souls of suicides are reprobate since their intellect is benighted. Instead of liberating the soul from the body, the act of suicide pushed those souls into "a condition perfectly correspondent to its former inclinations and habits, lamentations and woes" (ibid, 32). In effect, immortality for those souls represents a sort of hell.⁶ This conflation of inner restlessness and hellish immortality is reiterated in *Manfred*, where the hero is "eternally but thus" (I.ii: 70), since his past wrong actions "have made my days and nights imperishable" (II.i: 53). Moreover, in stating that:

There is a power upon me which withholds
And makes it my fatality to live;
If it be life to wear within myself
This barrenness of spirit, and to be
My own soul's sepulchre,
(I.ii: 23-27),

or in stating that he has "affronted death", yet "the cold hand / Of an all-pitiless demon held me back" (II.ii: 137-138), Byron seems to follow Taylor, who indicates that

⁶ In parallel with Taylor, Byron evokes those prone to suicide as "the dark in soul", and parallels them with "the Scorpion girt by fire", metaphorically illustrating their mental blockage as a result of inner restlessness, arising from a feeling of guilt (e.g. *The Giaour* 422-439).

Socrates in *Phaedo* warned against suicide by a cryptic statement of how “we are placed as in a certain prison secured by a guard” (Taylor 1792, 36), adding only that the sage was reluctant to elaborate on the arcane mystery of the soul’s necessary progress to growth. Taylor’s citing of Clemens Alexandrinus and Philolaus as having stated “that the soul is united with the body for the sake of suffering punishment; and that it is buried in the body as in a sepulchre” (ibid, 8) anticipates Manfred’s words of being his own soul’s sepulchre, while his quotation from Pythagoras “that whatever we feel when awake, is death; and when asleep, a dream” (8) seems reiterated in the above lines from *Churchill’s Grave*.

In the context of Socrates’ paradoxical teaching how “it is the business of philosophers to study to die, and to be themselves dead”, while at the same time repudiating suicide, Taylor introduces the concept of “philosophical death” in place of suicide (82-83). Again, Taylor’s *Dissertation* fits Byron’s notion of a mysterious guilt by arguing that the souls who suffer from inner hell are probably guilty of many other crimes, his notion being taken from Plato’s *metempsychosis*. However, Taylor is sure that “the latent justice of their punishment will be manifestly revealed; the apparent inconsistencies in the administration of providence fully reconciled; and the doubts concerning the wisdom of its proceedings entirely dissolved” (33-34), the paradigms of reconciliation and the loss of doubt evoking a final (if belated) union of those souls with the *Kalon* rather than presenting another parallel with the Calvinist stress on big revelations with regard to contemporary (in)justice coming only “hereafter” (Barton, 34). In the process, Taylor presents intellectual development as a key to the soul’s well-being and redemption from their painful encasement in flesh, which in return can be seen as a means to their progressive growth in knowledge. This attitude is espoused throughout the progressive course of *Manfred*, the hero’s occasional misgivings notwithstanding. However, Taylor indicates that only the select souls, “born with the true philosophic genius”, can effectively liberate their souls, the liberation being conditioned on their “understanding of the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, and in the means of returning to the principles from which they originally fell” (16). The secret of the wisdom commanded by those souls is, in return, contained in the symbolism of the Greater Eleusinian Mysteries, which were similarly denied to those insufficiently enlightened, as discussed in the Chapter One. For Taylor, the myth came closer to the truth of things than science ever could, since it was derived from an “intellectual source” (46-48). Taylor gave particular importance to the myth of

Proserpine, abducted by Hades, reading it as the allegory of the pure soul who fell into the “hell” of matter. Ceres, for her part, represents the wayward roamings of the same soul on their way towards ascension. In *Manfred*, the figures of Manfred and Astarte could be seen as the twinned souls, one of which roams the upper world while the other dwells beneath, following the myth of Ceres and Proserpine. In suggesting a sort of exchange between them, where “thou wilt be / One of the blessed – and that I shall die” (II.iv: 126-127), Manfred suggests the notion of the soul’s symbolic duality, suspended between dust and deity, in a parallel to Taylor’s reading of the myth of Proserpine and Ceres. In the course of the play, Manfred is following an Eleusinian *theoria*, gradually acquiring the means of returning to the principles from which he originally fell, as suggested by Taylor in his definition of the soul’s learning process. Taylor’s *Dissertation* effectively put Byron onto a process of a series of Levantine motifs, whether already used in his previous writings or stored in the poet’s imagination, within a dramatic poem which presents a true mental theatre in reiterating and staging a philosophical paradox based on a drive towards suicide and its repercussions.

THE GREEK IMAGINARY AND THE NATURAL SUBLIME

During his travels through the Low Countries towards Switzerland, Byron once again surveyed “his” patrician legacy, established on his appropriated Greek paradigm, as discussed in the Introduction. Based on the Classical tropes which conditioned a British gentleman’s perception of the Continental landscape, Byron now once again “saw” anew the plains and hills encompassing steep mountains, ravines, woods, rivers and cataracts with accompanying thunderstorms. On the grounds of their vastness, the Swiss mountains were the very incarnations of the pastoral tropes inherited from the Classics, an upgraded impression of the blueprint previously seen in Epirus, Acarnania and *Stereia Ellada*, where the mountains had been perceived as too small to be inhabited by the Olympian gods. Thus, Byron was once again roaming the familiar Classical pastures, haunted by the “gentle spirit” of his Greek imaginary that inspired the composition of *CHP* I-II. Progressing towards Switzerland, he sighted a series of more recent battlefields bordering on Ancient and feudal ruins, evoking the Western-European legacy of ruins epitomized by Pausanias’ periegesis. Even without Taylor’s Pausanias by his side, Byron was proficient in viewing the North-Western European landscape through the lense of Greek tropes, as were his respective travelling companions,

Polidori, Shelley and Hobhouse, who all had received a gentlemanly Classical education. As Hobhouse had done in Greece, Polidori kept the evidence of the landscape they witnessed on their travels within a diary, intended primarily for keeping British audience informed of Byron's Continental movements and financed by John Murray by an advanced payment.⁷ Shelley, for his part, left an epistolary journal of his Swiss journeys, addressed to his friend Thomas Love Peacock (*Letters* II, 488-501). In addition, the above-mentioned issue of the *Pamphleteer* was a welcome reminder of Byron's earlier Levantine mindspace in featuring Taylor's *Dissertation* on Plato and Greek myth as well as an official assessment of Lord Elgin's marbles made by a committee formed especially to suit the purpose, effectively submitted to the both Houses of Parliament.⁸ Notably, Byron returned from Greece in the same ship with the Elgin marbles (Marchand I, 270).

i. Classical mountain tropes revisited

While Byron's travelling companions espoused a Classical approach to the Swiss landscape, Byron went back to his earlier model of Greek imaginary, where the non-Classical coexisted with the Classical, as described in Chapter Two. However, he seems to have been more exacting in what he wanted to see in a chosen frame of landscape, namely the *phantasmaton* of a Continental Ottoman Greece which used to be the cradle of his creative imagination. This desire is attested in his subsequent letter to Samuel Rogers (4 April 1817) where he gives a thumbnail sketch of his Swiss impressions. The route to the Jungfrau, he wrote,

from the Grindewald over the Schadack to Brienz & it's (sic) lake – past the Reichenbach & all that mountain road . . . reminded me of Albania & Aetolia - & Greece –except that the people here were more civilized & rascally (*BLJ* V, 205).

Evidently, Oriental Greece was very much alive with Byron at the time of this letter, coinciding with the time he was revising the final act of *Manfred*. However, his Greek

⁷ See William Michael Rossetti, "Introduction", *The Diary of Dr John William Polidori, 1816, Relating to Shelley, Byron, etc. Edited and elucidated by William Michael Rossetti* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1911), pp. 1-24 (p. 21). Hereinafter *Diary*. Rossetti was Polidori's nephew who succeeded Mary Shelley as editor of Shelley's works.

⁸ See [n.a.], "Report from the Select Committee on Lord Elgin's Collection of Sculptured Marbles", *The Pamphleteer* 8.15/16 (London: A. J. Valpy, 1816), 431-454.

associations came alive much earlier, while still in the Low Countries. Thus, in a letter to Hobhouse from Karlsruhe (16 May 1816), cited in the previous chapter, Byron compared the area of Mainz with Delvinachi and Libochavo.⁹ In the same letter, Byron shows the extent to which Classical tropes determined his contemporary outlook in stating: “The Plain at Waterloo is a fine one – but not much after Marathon & Troy – Cheronea – & Platea - ” (*BLJ* V, 76).¹⁰ Accordingly, as Polidori noted in his diary, Byron sang a Turkish song as they were riding away from Waterloo (*Diary*, 63). Near Bonn, Polidori noted the ruins of a large amphitheatre amongst the seven hills (locally called, “the Seven Mountains”), and the ruins of the Gothic castle of Drachenfels, “now a mere ruin, formerly a castle of which many a tale is told” (*ibid*), suggesting a conflation of the Classical and its other (*quia* Gothic) on the site, anticipated by Byron’s and Hobhouse’s impressions of wild nature and scarce Classical ruins in Ottoman Greece, whose tall, steep, lean minarets might have well provided an associative parallel with the tall and lean towers of Gothic architecture in North-Western Europe. The spot where “one noble brother killed another” (*ibid*), marked by a roadside monument, evoked the primal curse and subsequent restlessness haunting the Ancient Greek and Byronic hero. During this time, Byron was again voicing “Harold’s” musings about an Ancient (patrician) legacy in Ancient ruins and vanished graves, originally begun in *Stereia Ellada* (i.e Boeotia) (*CPW* II, 189). Similarly with Byron’s previous recourse to myth as an escape from history and its battles in *CHP* II, the remains of the recent carnage at Waterloo and the ensuing “human degradation” and “oppressed people” (*BLJ* V, 77) are kept at a bearable distance by means of an ahistorical, pastoral and mythic frame of reference, wherein the Rhine is compared with Lethe (*CHP* III: 450), its valley additionally associated with Elysium by the metaphor of lilies in the third Drachenfeld stanza (*CHP* III: 516-525), while the recent history is relegated to Classical myth by the comparison of Waterloo with Cannae and Marathon (*CHP* III: 608-609). In the context of these stanzas, - and in the context of Byron’s mythic thinking, recently developed into a deliberate concept taken from Taylor’s *Dissertation*, - “the castled crag of Drachenfels” which “frowns o’er the wide and

⁹ This impression is indirectly corroborated in Polidori’s diary, which unwittingly echoes Hobhouse’s earlier description of Delvinachi (e.g. *Travels* I, pp. 72-73) in featuring rain, mud towns, woods, hills, and wineslopes (*Diary*, p. 81).

¹⁰ The conflation of Classical intertext and contemporary political context was typical for Byron, as attested in his pre-exile references to Napoleon’s defeat and exile (whereby his references to Milo, Sylla, Juvenal, Tiberius, Dionisius and Anthony and Cleopatra allegorize Napoleon’s contemporary situation). See *BLJ* III, pp. 256-257.

windling Rhine” (*CHP* III: 496-497) already suggests the “castled crags” which “Look o’er the lower valleys” in *Manfred* (II.i: 8-9), simultaneously translating both Drachenfels and Manfred’s castle into the realm of his Greek imaginary. In the subsequent lines on “ceaseless vultures” preying on “self-condemning bosoms” (*CHP* III: 567-568), McGann cryptically honours Byron’s Classical (Greek) intertext (*CPW* II, 306), taken from Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*.¹¹ Equally Greek is the trope of “pure” love, based on “stronger ties / Than the church links withal” (*CHP* III: 488-489), which “Had stood the text of mortal enmities / Still undivided, and cemented more by peril, dreaded most in female eyes” (491-493), evoking Ancient Greek virtue (*arete*) epitomised by Sophocles’ Antigone. In choosing the loyalty to her dead father and brother over the affiliation with her adoptive family, namely that of the new Theban King Creon, who welcomed her as his prospective daughter-in-law, Antigone chose “pure love” of a sister and a daughter to the “stronger tie” of a marital (sexual) love. By staying loyal to her family, who were the public enemies of Thebes, Antigone braved the peril of committing high treason against the current Theban king. After being trialled and put in prison, she took her own life.¹²

Crossing the Rhine, Byron and Polidori entered Switzerland via Fribourg on 19 May 1816. Once again, herds of goats reminded the Classically trained British gentlemen of pastoral tropes. Polidori reiterates Hobhouse’s earlier Classical reaction at the sight of goats and shepherds, given in Chapter Two, by noting boys leading goats “just in the antique style” (*Diary*, 96). Their route across the site of Ancient Aventicum (contemporary Avanches) allowed Byron to revisit his previous antiquarian pursuits. Thus Polidori:

We found in a barn heads, plinths, capitals, and shafts, heaped promiscuously. (...) There is the Amphitheatre, hollow yet pretty perfect, but no stonework visible, overgrown with trees; the size, my companion tells me, was larger than common (*Diary*, 94).¹³

¹¹ McGann’s reference to “Prometheus on Caucasus” (*CPW* II, p. 306) in the context of those lines should be understood as a cryptic reference to Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*. While referring to the ninth book of Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (*Civil War*) as the intertext of *CHP* III.li: 454 (*CPW* II, p. 304), McGann does not note that the intertext of Lucan provides an important parallel with Byron’s lines on Napoleon (*CHP* III: xli).

¹² In his lines on Julia Alpinula, who died of grief after her father was executed at Aventicum (*CHP* III: lxvi), Byron transposed the motif of Antigonesque loyalty in the Roman context.

¹³ In a parallel, Hobhouse attested to the sorry state of Greek ruins in Thebes, where their Greek host showed them “a flat piece of marble in his courtyard, a foot and a half long and half a foot wide, containing an inscription, which I copied as far as the letters were legible; but the greater part of them had been worn away by the service to which the marble had been put: when I saw it, it was lying under the pump, half covered with mortar, the mixing of which was the use to which it had latterly been applied, and would have been so had it contained an ode of Pindar’s” (*Travels* I, pp. 235-236).

Anticipating Byron's reference to Aventicum in *CHP* III: lxxv, his description of the site in a letter to Hobhouse from Sécheron (26 May 1816) describes a solitary pillar:

We went over the site of Aventicum – where there is some beautiful Mosaic of some extent & preservation – a few inscriptions – a column or two down – several scattered shafts - & one solitary pillar in the midst of a field – the last of its family – besides extensive traces of a wall & amphitheatre (*BLJ* V, 78).

Byron highlights the problem of vanishing Ancient legacy and heritage by personifying the Ancient pillar (i.e. by giving it a “family”). This personification of landscape was inherent in Classical poetry, as shown in the previous chapter. In *Manfred*, pine trees are similarly personified by being evoked as “Grey-hair’d with anguish” (I.ii: 66), and subsequently, too, with Manfred, who in return is “A blighted trunk upon a cursed root” (I.ii: 68). This time, the trope of an Ancient family heritage, including the primal curse, seems revisited in the ruins of “Nature”.

Upon sighting Mont Blanc from Sécheron, Polidori described it as “ethereal in appearance, mingling with clouds” (*Diary*, 97), echoing Hobhouse's previous admiration on the sight of Parnassus from Pleistus and Arachova (*Travels* I, 210).¹⁴ In the above letter from Sécheron, Byron indicated to Hobhouse that, as regards his introductory Swiss tour, “there are things - not inferior to what we have seen elsewhere - & one or two superior – such as Mont Blanc” (*BLJ* V, 78), obviously juxtaposing his and Hobhouse's past experiences in Greece with his Swiss impressions. Thus far, all the impressions of mountains given by the three patrician gentlemen were formed on sighting the mountains from afar, following their Classical predecessors. While the Greeks personified mountain landscape as brutish giants, the Romans suggested high mountains as the sites as horrifying wilderness and desolation, especially in the case of the Helvetian Alps, evoked as “*montes inaccessi*”, “*capita aspera*”, “*saevae Alpes*”, “*Alpes gelidae*” (Hyde, 78-79, 81-82). Byron describes the “darken’d Jura, whose cap heights appear / Precipitously steep, and drawing near” (*CHP* III: 809-810) in a similar fashion. As already stated in the Introduction, Byron shows familiarity with the Natural (Burkeian) Sublime and its psychological uses, defining the concept as

All which expands the spirit, yet appals,

¹⁴ According to Polidori, the Alps around Lausanne, “though covered with snow [had] not the great appearance on account of the height of the lake itself” (*Diary*, pp. 96-97). His impression parallels Hobhouse's earlier impression of Parnassus, described as “a vast range of hills” rather than a single mountain (*Travels* I, p. 208).

Gather round the summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave the vain man below
(*CHP* III.lxii: 596-598).

As shown within the context of *CHP* III and *Manfred*, Byron's sympathies are with the vain man rather than with the Alps, "the palaces of Nature" (*CHP* III: 591). Yet, "who", or "what", is nature? Does the paradigm of "throned Eternity in icy halls / Of cold sublimity" (593-594) refer to the impressively huge matter of mountains, or to its much more vast ruler, the divine mind, evoked in *The Prayer of Nature*? While referring to mountains as "Nature's realms of worship" (*CHP* III: 858), Byron actually means the primitivistic sun worship of "the early Persian" (851) - which, as he knew, was appropriated by Socrates, the wisest amongst Ancient Greeks, and which is in return favoured over the later "columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek" (857). Like Socrates, who honoured the sun, the moon and his *daimon* and ironized the Olympians, yet who, as noted in the Introduction, claimed that he could not learn anything from trees, Byron espouses a very distant attitude to real nature:

(...) I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain
(*CHP* III.lxxii: 683-688).

As might be inferred from the above lines, Byron can see nothing to *love* in nature. Similarly, Manfred admires nature as admirably shaped matter, yet cannot love *it*:

My mother Earth!
And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye
(I.ii: 7-9).

Having a material body, Manfred is partly "matter". However, he wants to be a creator and not a creature, the latter being suggested as sentient yet senseless in the above lines of *CHP* III. While voicing the angst of "the vain man below", Manfred pays uneasy respect to the eagle, his potential rival as the highest-ranked predator in the fleshly chain, flying past him as if sensing his current vulnerability: "Well may'st thou swoop so near me – I should be / Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets" (I.ii: 30-31). This notion of real nature as a merciless arena of a food chain, in which the hero is an alienated,

weak link but for his alliance with the non-material, is checked by the occasional personification of landscape, such as the following:

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains,
They crowned him long ago
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a diadem of snow.
Around his waist are forests braced,
The Avalanche in his hand;
(I.i. 60-65).¹⁵

Thus, Byron evokes the Classical tradition, the personification of mountains, albeit in more contemporary terms (since neither Homer nor Virgil would use the term “monarch” and “diadem”). Apparently, the sightings of the far-off Mont Blanc provided Byron with all the necessary inspiration for “the halls of cold sublimity” in *CHP* III, and for the above personification in *Manfred*. Still, he wanted to survey the Alpine peaks from mountain vantage points, as did some of Ancient Greeks and Romans.¹⁶ In the above-cited letter from Sécheron, Byron urged Hobhouse to join him quickly, making a point that he was unwilling “to begin my Alpine scrambles without you” (*BLJ* V, 78). Within hours from writing down his wish for a different travelling companion, Byron was to meet Percy Bysshe Shelley and his entourage, consisting of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and her stepsister Mary Jane “Claire” Clairmont (Byron’s final English lover), who happily introduced the two contemporary poets.

THE SHELLEYAN CONTEXTS

Immediately upon introduction, Byron, Polidori and the Shelley party started to meet on a daily basis. Apparently, they had shared a recent experience of an English animus against their unconventional views and lifestyle, as well as their affinity with pagan Greek thought, encompassing both Plato’s idealism and Epicurean scepticism. Byron was by this time familiar with Shelley’s *Queen Mab* (1813), which Shelley took care to send him in 1814,¹⁷ as well as with *Alastor*, which he read in early 1816 (Robinson, 15).

¹⁵ Again, Polidori’s impression of Mont Blanc, “ethereal in appearance, mingling with clouds” (*Diary*, p. 97), echoes Hobhouse’s admiration of the cloud formation at sunset above Parnassus, similarly sighted from afar, given in the previous chapter.

¹⁶ E.g. Philip V of Macedon, Hadrian, Pausanias, Diodorus, Lucretius (Hyde, pp. 75 n4, 81, 84).

¹⁷ Byron especially admired the the beginning of Shelley’s *Queen Mab* (*Life*, p. 315), where death and sleep are compared, a theme taken from Socrates’ defence:

How wonderful is Death,
Death, and his brother Sleep!
One, pale as yonder waning moon

The Oriental and Platonic roamings of Shelley's *Alastor* might have been influenced by Byron's *Oriental Tales* and *CHP* I-II. However, the main content of their Swiss conversations was their shared scepticism, taken from Classical Greek thought and affiliated with Enlightened Deism. As attested by the entry in Polidori's diary (30 May 1816), *Queen Mab* and its notorious sceptical Notes seem to have been the initial intertext of the party's conversation.¹⁸ Shelley's exceptional "Socratic" charm were remarked in the following comparison of Byron and Shelley by Thomas Medwin:

Like Socrates, [Shelley] united the gentleness of the lamb with the wisdom of the serpent – the playfulness of the boy with the profoundness of the philosopher (...) Byron was so sensible of his inability to cope with him, that he always avoided coming to a trial of their strength in controversy, which he generally cut off with a joke or pun; for Shelley was what Byron could not be, a close, logical, and subtle reasoner, much of which he owed to his early habit of disputation at Oxford, and to his constant study of Plato, whose system of getting his adversary into admissions, and thus entangling him in his own web, he followed (Medwin 1913, 435-436).

In contrast to Medwin's claim, Byron and Shelley were more than compatible with regard to their views on poetry, politics and sceptical philosophy. In an important contrast to Byron, who was typically flippant at the expense of his "scribbling", Shelley took himself very seriously as a thinking man's poet. Like Byron, Shelley was mediating his way between Plato's idealism and the Epicurean atomic materialism epitomized by the second-century AD Roman philosopher Lucretius in his poem, *De Rerum Natura*.¹⁹ In addition to being of the same taste with regard to Ancient Greek philosophy, Shelley and Byron admired contemporary Enlightened sceptics, who typically read Biblical stories in the context of ancient Indo-European myth. Both poets admired the writings of William Drummond, whom Byron had personally met while on his Grand Tour, and with whose *Oedipus Judaicus* he had been delighted, as noted in the previous chapter. Shelley, for his part, was impressed by Drummond's *Academical Questions* (1805), describing the work as "a volume of very acute and powerful

With lips of lurid blue;
The other, rosy as the morn
When throned on ocean's wave
It blushes all o'er the world:
Yet both so passing wonderful!
(I: 1-8).

See Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Queen Mab", Woodcock, pp. 4-65. (p. 4).

¹⁸ Thus Polidori: "[Shelley] is very clever; the more I read his *Queen Mab*, the more beauties I find" (*Diary*, p. 107).

¹⁹ Shelley used the citations from Lucretius in the second epigraph and in a note to *Queen Mab*. (Woodcock, pp. 3, 74).

metaphysical criticism” in his Preface to *The Revolt of Islam* (1818).²⁰ Similarly with the works of the fellow-Orientalist, Sir William Jones and the French sceptics, Charles Dupuis (1742-1809), and Jean-Sylvain Bailly (1736-1793), Drummond saw Ancient philosophy as concurrent and synonymous with religion (McCalman, 339, 487). In effect, he mocked the literalist approach to Hebrew myth:

It is monstrous to be told, if the sense be taken literally, that the infinite mind showed its back parts to Moses . . . Am I really to believe in the existence of such singular conversations, as are said in the book of Job, to have taken place between God and the Devil? “Skin for skin”, said Satan to Jehovah. The expression is not very elegant, and it does not sound very spiritual. The story of Jonah in the fish’s belly, if it be not allegorical, is a most surprising one, and the whole must be a little puzzling to the natural historian.²¹

An even more radical view of contemporary religion was espoused by Thomas Taylor, whose *Dissertation* Byron had recently read. As Cochran indicates, Taylor knew Shelley’s friend, Thomas Love Peacock (Cochran 2001, 63), poet, novelist and a dedicated Classical scholar who lived and worked with Shelley in Marlowe.²² Like Byron, Shelley was fond of transposing the Classics into contemporary English verse idiom. As Medwin remembers, the young Shelley

would sometimes open at hazard a prose writer, as Livy or Sallust, and by changing the position of the words, and occasionally substituting others, he would transmute several sentences from prose to prose, to heroic, or more commonly elegiac verse, for he was particularly charmed with the graceful and easy flow of the latter, with surprising rapidity and readiness (Medwin 1913, 35).

After a fortnight spent under the same roof of the Hotel D’Angleterre in Sécheron, the Shelley party moved into a house on the Mont Blanc side of the lake, while Byron moved to the Villa Diodati. Until Hobhouse’s arrival (and excepting a short interval of “Monk” Lewis’ visit, noted in the Introduction), Byron left Shelley’s company only to sleep, breakfast and dine (*Life*, 319). On their frequent sailing excursions across Lake Geneva, from whence Mont Blanc could be seen in the distance,

²⁰ See Percy Bysshe Shelley, “The Revolt of Islam: A Poem in Twelve Cantos”, *Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. In Two Volumes* (London: John Ascham, 1834), II, p. viii (n1).

²¹ See William Drummond, *Oedipus Judaicus* (Kila, MT: Kessinger Publishing Co, 2003 [1811]), p. viii.

²² Shelley’s brand of scepticism, seen as “atheism” within the contemporary frame of reference, was in many ways close to Thomas Taylor’s Neo-Platonic polytheism, set out in the notes to his translation of Pausanias as well as in the *Dissertation*. Asserting the necessity of a symbolic, associative reading in the approach to Ancient myths, as well as in the approach to Plato’s fables, Taylor indirectly extols poets, to whom such reading is inherent, as the most sublime of philosophers, thus anticipating the argument of Shelley’s *A Defence of Poetry*, where poetic creation is presented as a means to an end, and an end in itself, similar to Plato’s *Kalon*.

Byron's memories of the Epirotic landscape were again rekindled. During a rough and windy nightly sail, Byron offered to perform an Albanian song. According to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, he presently gave forth what he called "an exact imitation of the savage Albanian mode, - laughing, the while, at our disappointment, who had expected a wild Eastern melody" (*Life*, 316). When the weather became too bad for excursions, the party stayed over at the Diodati, spending time in conversations which kept everyone awake and lively until the morning hours. The mysterious dining time was probably Byron's favourite writing time, during which he finished *CHP* III.

i. The Greek intertext of the Diodati contest

According to Medwin, Shelley was at this time studying Greek tragedy, with a narrow focus on Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, whose hero he considered the antitype of Milton's Satan, and which he translated for Byron from the Greek *viva voce*, as we have seen in the Introduction.²³ As argued in McGann's already cited note to *CHP* III: 567 (*CPW* II, 306), Byron was reminded of Prometheus before he was introduced to Shelley, while he was contemplating the far-off Swiss Alps on his way toward Geneva. Even if Byron had previously translated two choral fragments from the Latin version of the play, he was glad to be reminded of his favourite play by his friend's translation. In effect, Aeschylus' Prometheus appears to have inspired the Diodati "contest" in the alleged "ghost stories" (c 15 - 22 June 1816), even if Byron provided the company with the French translation of German Gothic stories called, "The Phantasmagoriana" (Brewer, 36).²⁴ Apart from *Prometheus Bound*, there were three other plays about

²³ On the grounds of seeing fifth-century BC Athens as the epitome of the moral capacity of poetry, Shelley saw Athenian tragedy as a locus from which to observe a link between poetry and social good. As he later stated in *A Defence of Poetry*: "The drama being that form under which a greater number of modes of expression of poetry are susceptible of being combined than any other, the connection of poetry and social good is more observable in the drama than in whatever other form. And it is indisputable that the highest perfection of human society has ever corresponded with the highest dramatic excellence; and that a corruption or the extinction of the drama in a nation where it has once flourished, is a mark of a corruption of manners, and an extinction of the energies which sustain the soul of social life. But, as Machiavelli says of political institutions, that life may be preserved and renewed, if men should arise capable of bringing back the drama to its principles" (Woodcock, pp. 645-646).

²⁴ As we can infer from Ellen Brinks, the fact that Byron and the Shelley party read German ghost stories in French translation can be read as a sign of their political radicalism and ideological subversiveness. According to Brinks, "German gothic literature, as much for its perceived 'Germanness' as for its gothicism, was said to exhibit and promulgate the worst vices of the country: an imbrication of political radicalism and sexual frankness" (Brinks, pp. 19-20). Thus, "radical, anti-paternal sentiments or a willed departure from patriarchal values" were the attributes of "German gothic" (ibid, p. 20). In this instance, Brinks' trope of "German gothic" collides with the context of Greek and Enlightened scepticism, which, as I argue, lies at the bottom line of the Diodati exchange.

Prometheus ascribed to Aeschylus: *Prometheus Unbound* (*Luomenos*), *Prometheus the Firebearer* (*Purphoros*) and *Prometheus the Firekindler* (*Pyrkaeus*) (Sommerstein, 314). Owing to the fact that it appeared to have been a fragment of a mysterious whole, whether a tetralogy, a trilogy, or a dilogy, *Prometheus Bound* possibly sparked a need in Byron, Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin to revise what appeared to be an unfinished speculation on the destiny of the brave Titan, mankind, and the universe. In proof, the contemporary works by the three writers, including Wollstonecraft Godwin's *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus*, Shelley's *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, as well as Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon*, *Prometheus*, and *Manfred*, thematize an inhumane form of cosmic rulership countered by an isolated Promethean figure. According to Podlecki, Prometheus "became for the English Romantics an irresistible figure of rebellion, a prototype of the creative artist, isolated, misunderstood, reviled" (Podlecki 2005, 52), especially for Shelley, who filtered the Promethean myth through the lens of Milton's Satan (ibid, 53). Given his consistency in voicing the radically democratic thought throughout his poetic career, complemented by the poetic eminence of his *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley is more identifiable with Prometheanism than Byron. Nevertheless, Byron is more continuous in his reference to Prometheus, which started with his early translation of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Vincitus* (1804), subsequently running through the *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte* (1814), *Prometheus* (1816), *The Prophecy of Dante* (1819), *Manfred* (1817), *Marino Faliero* (1821), *Sardanapalus* (1821), *Cain* (1821) and *Heaven and Earth* (1821).

Significantly, Polidori's entry from 12 June 1816 mentions "a confab with Dr. O[dier] on perpanism, etc" (*Diary*, 122). W. M. Rossetti glosses the mysterious word:

The word written is perpanism, or possibly perhanism. Is there any such word, medical or other? Should it perchance be pyrrhonism? (ibid).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Childe Harold is suggested as "a modern Timon", referring to Shakespeare's Timon of Athens and to his historical antitype, Timon of Phlius, the anticipator of Pyrrhonism. In a letter to Hodgson written while Byron was still fresh from his Levantine Tour (3 September 1811), Pyrrhonism is mentioned amongst Byron's favourite (contextual) "heresies":

I am nothing at all; but I would sooner be a Paulician, Manichean, Spinozist, Gentile, Pyrrhonian, Zoroastrian, than one of the seventy-two villainous sects who are tearing each other to peaces for the love of the Lord and hatred of each other (*BLJ* II, 89).

Pyrrhonist thought influenced David Hume's *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), formative of Shelley's thought while in Oxford (Medwin 1913, 77). Thus, Polidori's reference to Pyrrhonism suggests that he was preparing himself to participate in fierce sceptical debates in the Villa Diodati. The subject-matter of scepticism is further suggested by Polidori's journal entry from 9 June 1816, where he mentions reading the Greek sceptic Lucian of Samosata (*Diary*, 121). Significantly, Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead* feature the characters of Trophonius and Sardanapalus, as well as that of Socrates, while *Halcyon*, *The Sale of Philosophers* and *The Fisherman* notably feature Socrates as the dramatic character.²⁵ Moreover, Prometheus features in several of Lucian's satirical dialogues, namely in "Prometheus", "Caucasus, or Prometheus", and "Jupiter and Prometheus".²⁶ Polidori's entry of 15 June 1816, the date speculated as the evening when the Diodati "contest" was struck, records "a conversation about principles - whether man was to be thought merely an instrument" (*Diary*, 123), apparently a sophistic duel between Polidori and Shelley. In her Introduction to the second edition of *Frankenstein* (1832), Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley provides a covert reference on the actual subject-matter of the "ghost-stories" by a reference to Dr Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), encrypted within the allegory of the vermicelli:

Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these, various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and among others the nature of the principle of life, and whether there was any probability of its ever being discovered and communicated. They talked of the experiments of Dr Darwin (...) who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case, till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion. Not thus, after all, would life be given. Perhaps a corpse could be re-animated: galvanism had

²⁵ See Lucian of Samosata, *The Works of Lucian, Translated from Greek by Thomas Francklin*, Vol I (London: T. Cadell, 1780). Henceforth Lucian.

²⁶ See Lucian, respectively, pp. 8-11; pp. 56-64; pp. 92-93. In *Prometheus*, the Titan is epitomized by a contemporary sophist, whose words provide a parallel to the contemporary scoffer, a perspective shared by Byron and Shelley with regard to British cant. *Caucasus, or Prometheus* presents a dramatic exchange between Prometheus, Vulcan and Mercury, where the Titan is answering point-for-point charges made against him, again in the manner of a contemporary sophist. According to Peter Cochran, Byron's *TVOJ* was inspired by Lucian, whose essay *On Sacrifices* satirizes human belief in evil god(s) in a manner parallel with some instances from *Manfred* (II.iv: 117-131), where he thinks Byron deliberately applies a mock-paradigm of sacrifice. See Peter Cochran, "'Sacrifice and Offering Thou Didst Not Desire': Byron and Atonement", Hopps and Stabler, pp. 93-105 (pp. 95, 99). By linking *Manfred* and *TVOJ* within the same sceptical and satirical context, Cochran anticipates my argument on the shared (mock-Gothic) motives in *Manfred* and *TVOJ*, discussed in Chapters One and Four of this thesis.

given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth.²⁷

Despite being ordained, Darwin was an Enlightened sceptic whose thought paralleled that of Richard Payne Knight in seeing all mythology derived from an original sexual myth, and that of William Jones in claiming that Classical and Oriental myths were mythopoetic representations of the natural processes he was assessing as a scholar (Butler 1981, 129, Brewer, 124). In effect, the real subject-matter of “ghost stories” was that of the afterlife, seen from the perspective of Enlightened and Classical scepticism. In contrast to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, Shelley did not seem to have taken the Diodati contest seriously, producing nothing but a short and flippant poetic fragment (Brewer, 7, 37).²⁸ However, his friendly “contest” with Byron with regard to exchange of intertext was only beginning, and about to last until his death.²⁹

Apparently recycling the events of Hobhouse’s and Byron’s visit to Ephesus in Asia Minor (13-15 March 1810), Byron’s official contribution to the Diodati conversation was a prose fragment entitled, *Augustus Darvell*, dated on 17 June 1816, the date on which Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin began her *Frankenstein*.³⁰ The fragment preambles a suggested supernatural assignment on a sacred Classical site.

²⁷ See Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 3rd edition (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1831. Repr. New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1994), p. viii.

²⁸ Thus Shelley's fragment:

A shovel of his ashes took
From the hearth's obscurest nook;
With a body bowed and bent
She tottered forth to the paved courtyard,
Muttering mysteries as she went. –
Helen and Henry knew that Granny
Was as much afraid of ghosts as any,
And so they followed hard –
But Helen clung to her brother's arm
And her own shadow made her shake
(Brewer, p. 37).

²⁹ According to Brewer, the Gothic, or rather “vampiric” context and intertext shared between Shelley and Byron started with Byron's *The Giaour* (introducing an ancestor draining “the stream of life” from his successors) and concluded with *The Cenci*, where incest is conflated with vampirism following *Manfred*, which in return suggests both crimes by the means of hero's self-accusations (Brewer, pp. 62-66).

³⁰ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “Augustus Darvell: A Fragment of a Ghost Story”, *CMP*, pp. 58-63. During his Levantine Tour, Byron appears to have been equally unimpressed by the sites of Eleusis and Ephesus (then still unexcavated), since he left no written records of those excursions. In the light of his earlier movements in Greece, Byron appears to have appended the emblems of Asclepius, god of healing (i.e. the snake and the stork), presented in Pausanias as the alias of Trophonius (Taylor III, p. 94), the hero of a Bacchic cult at Livadhia whose ancient tumulus he visited on his way toward Athens, to the nearly vanished site of Ephesus. In addition, Byron probably remembered Pausanias' indication that the salty waters of Eleusis have an underground passage to the surroundings of Thebes, previously noted by Hobhouse (*Travels* I, p. 327).

According to Polidori, Byron's original blueprint for the "ghost story" included "the circumstances of two friends leaving England, and one dying in Greece, the other finds him alive, upon his return, and making love to his sister" (*Diary*, 15). The plot was probably inspired by an anecdote from Byron's real life, involving his Harrow friend, Robert Peele, who believed to have seen Byron in London at the time when the poet was lying sick from fever in Patras (*BLJ* VII, 192). According to David Ellis, the above case of mistaken identity appears to have put Byron, "a natural sceptic, onto speculating on coincidental phenomena, apparently inexplicable by reason", effectively inspiring the plot of his (and Polidori's) story.³¹ In addition, Byron's original plot, announced to his assembled friends in the Villa Diodati, involved an oath by a surviving friend to the dying Byronic hero that his "disease" shall remain a secret (*Diary*, 15). In consequence of his current preoccupation with death to one's former self and a subsequent renewal, discussed in the first section of this chapter, and to his recent inspiration from Taylor's *Dissertation*, Byron might have intended to write a story presenting death as a transition, or yet another stage of the soul's *theoria*. Since Shelley did not take the Diodati contest seriously, and since Byron was self-conscious with regard to literary prose composition (with the exception of his letters and journals), the both poets abandoned their respective fragments as soon as the weather sufficiently improved,³² and went on the boating tour across Lake Lemman (c 23 - 31 July 1816),³³ leaving the rest of their entourage on-shore and accompanied by only two additional crew members. The tour probably celebrated Byron's completion of *CHP* III, to which he

³¹ See David Ellis, *Byron in Geneva: That Summer of 1816* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), p. 49. Also *CMP*, p. 332. Accused of plagiarizing Byron, Polidori wrote two letters to the editor of *The Morning Chronicle*, who published *The Vampyre* without his permission, and to the publisher Henry Colburn (*Diary*, pp. 13-19). In the latter document, dated 2 April 1819, Polidori states: I received the copy of the magazine of last April (the present month), and I am sorry to find that your Genevan correspondent has led you into a mistake with regard to the tale of *The Vampyre* - which is *not* Lord Byron's, but was written *entirely* by me at a request of a lady, who (upon my mentioning that his Lordship had said that it was his intention of writing a ghost story, depending for interest upon the circumstances of two friends leaving England, and one dying in Greece, the other finds him alive, upon his return, and making love to his sister) saying that she thought it impossible to work up such materials, desired I would write it for her, which I did in two idle mornings by her side. These circumstances above mentioned, and the one of the dying man obtaining an oath that the survivor should not in any way disclose his disease, are the only parts of the tale belonging to his Lordship (*Diary*, p. 15). Also *CMP*, p. 330.

³² Similarly, Byron had previously abandoned *Bramblebear and the Lady Penelope: A Chapter of a Novel* (1813) and *The Tale of Calil* (1816). See *CMP*, pp. 46-48, 51-58.

³³ The above dates are taken from Shelley's epistolary journal of the Lake tour (*Letters* II, pp. 489, 501). According to Marchand, the Lake tour took place between 22 June and 1 July (Marchand II, pp. 630, 632).

subsequently added the six Clarens stanzas, composed on the legendary site of Rousseau's *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761).

ii. The Lake tour

Byron and Shelley set on a pilgrimage dedicated to the “shrines” of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Charles Bonivard and William Gibbon, who finished his seminal *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1789) in Lausanne. Apart from Rousseau's *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, which Shelley took on board to read for the first time, they probably took along the *Pamphleteer* featuring Taylor's *Dissertation* and the assessment of Lord Elgin's marbles. Since Byron repeated his request for Taylor's Pausanias in the letter to Hobhouse from Evian, written on the first day of his Lake tour (23 June 1816), it is likely that Byron and Shelley were vividly discussing Taylor.

Since the fall of Athens and Venice, Switzerland came to be regarded as the next “Greek” democracy. The most notable Swiss freedom fighters were, respectively, the legendary fifteenth-century folk hero William Tell, as well as the historical figures Charles Bonivard (1496-1571) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), the latter of whom was a near contemporary of Byron and Shelley, and the ideological “father” of the French Revolution.³⁴ The high-minded notions of democracy, set out in the writings of a number of Ancient Greek writers and recently disseminated by Rousseau, were in stark contrast with the living standards of the common people in Switzerland. According to Shelley, the inhabitants of Vaud were “more wretched, diseased, and poor, that I ever recollect to have seen” (*Letters* II, 492), which led him to meditate on “the blighting mischief of despotism” and to juxtapose the division of Swiss cantons between “the King of Sardinia” and “the independent republic of Switzerland”, which approximated to his imaginary Greece (*ibid*). Much less idealistic, Byron was once again faced with the reality of “Oriental” squalor belying the “Classical” notion of democracy, transposed from *Stereia Ellada* into Helvetia. In his epistolary journal of their Lake tour, addressed to Thomas Love Peacock, Shelley revealed Byron's

³⁴ As shown in *CHP* III: lxxvii-lxxxi, Byron's attitude to Rousseau was quite complex, since he accuses the Swiss philosopher, evoked as “the self-torturing sophist”, “wild Rousseau”, and “the apostle of affliction”, of knowing “how to make madness beautiful”, and of casting “O'er erring deeds and thoughts, a heavenly hue / Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past / The eyes” (*CHP* III: lxxvii). According to McGann, the Byronic heroes real and fictional (i.e. Ali Pasha, the Giaour, Conrad, Napoleon) are similarly “the apostles of affliction whose life are ‘one long war with self-sought woes’” (McGann 1968, p. 174).

memories of Continental Greece, evident in his statement that “it was five years, [Byron] said, since he had slept in such beds” (*Letters* II, 491).

Like their Greek and Roman ancestors, Byron and Shelley were awed by the distant sight of “*Alpes gelidae*”, while enjoying the picturesque view of slopes and hills. Shelley’s vision of Vaud is essentially pastoral, “full of villages and vineyards”, with distant hills “very high and rocky”, yet “crowned and interspersed with woods”, and with even farther waterfalls which “echo from the cliffs, and shine afar” (*ibid*, 499). Shelley’s impression of the distant Savoy Alps seem to reiterate Hobhouse’s description of Epirus and Aetolo-Acarmania, given in the previous chapter, in featuring “the rocks (...) dark with pine forests”,

which become deeper and more immense, until the ice and snow mingle with the points of naked rock that pierce the blue air; but below, groves of walnut, chestnut, and oak, with openings, of lawny fields, attested the milder climate. (...) As we approached Evian, the mountains descended more precipitously to the lake, and masses of intermingled wood and rock overhung its shining sphere (491).

Finely attuned to the associative process of his fellow-poet, and to the pastoral tropes, Shelley wrote that the sights of the Bernese and Savoy Alps, as well as the sights of Meillerie and Clarens, “present themselves to the imagination as monuments of things that were once familiar, and of beings that were once dear to it” (497). Again, they were sighting a pastoral panorama, evoking Rousseau’s Julie as well as Theocritus’ *Idylls*, or Virgil’s *Eclogue X*.³⁵ Just like Hobhouse in Greece, Shelley suggests a “Grecian Jove” presiding over Helvetian Alps:

About half an hour after we have arrived at Evian, a few flashes of lightning came from a dark cloud, directly overhead, and continued after the cloud had

³⁵ It is worthwhile to compare Byron’s stanzas to Drachenfeld and Clarens (*CHP* III.lv: 496-535; xcix-civ) to Virgil:

Here are cold springs, Lycoris; here, soft meads;
A grot here; here I pass my life without thee.
(...) thou, far away,
Viewest (both) Alpine snows and Rhenish ice.
Ah, may those frosts not injure thee! Ah, may
The piercing ice not cut thy tender feet!
I’ll go on and Sicilian shepherd’s pipe
The songs play which I wrote in Chalcic verse
(*Eclogue X*: 47-48 ... 52-57).

See Virgil, “*Eclogue X*”, *Eclogues*, ed. Robert Coleman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 68-70 (p. 70).

dispersed. “Diespiter per pura tonantes egit, equos:”(sic) a phenomenon which certainly had no influence on me, corresponding with that which it produced on Horace (ibid, 492).

In the paraphrased poem of Horace, Jove was evoked as riding in a horse-drawn chariot across the stormy sky and simultaneously hurling thunderbolts (*Odes* I: 34). As the weather worsened, Shelley’s impressions suggest an informal prose transposition of Poseidon’s agency described in Homer’s “Battle of Gods”, mentioned in the previous chapter:

In one place we saw the two rocks of immense size, which had fallen from the mountain behind. One of these lodged in a room where a young woman was sleeping, not injuring her. The vineyards were utterly destroyed in its path, and the earth torn up (ibid).

The above anecdote seems reiterated in Manfred's angry accusation of the Alps to “only fall on things which still would live; / On the young flourishing forest, on the hut / And hamlet of the harmless villager” (I.ii: 79-81). The accusation is followed by a Grecian personification of mountains:

Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling up
The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters;
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash,
Which crush'd the waters into mist, and made
Their fountains find another channel – thus,
Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosenberg –
Why stood I not beneath it?
(*Manfred* I.ii: 92-100).

The above lines evoke the Ancient Greek personification of “the Earth-born brothers”, the Titans and the giants, discussed in the previous chapter. In Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*, the giant Typhon is described as “earth-born resident of Cilician cave”, and “the fearsome hundred-headed monster”:

Furious Typhon, who withstood all gods
Sibilating fear with his terrible jaws.
He flashed bolts of savage flames from his eyes,
Intent on dislodging Zeus from his tyranny by force.
But Zeus’ unsleeping missile came down on him,
A thunderbolt shooting down and breathing fire
That frightened him right out of his extravagant
Boasting. For he was struck right to his heart,
His strength burnt to ashes, blasted to ruin.
Now only a useless and drooping hulk,
He’s lying just beside the straits of the sea

Trapped beneath the roots of Mt. Etna
(*Prometheus Bound* 354-365).

As the allegory of volcanic matter, Typhon has a parallel in *Manfred*'s Fourth Spirit:

Where the slumbering earthquake
Lies pillow'd on fire,
And the lakes of bitumen
Rise boilingly higher;
Where the roots of the Andes
Strike deep in the earth,
As their summits to heaven
Shoot soaringly forth;
I have quitted my birth-place,
Thy bidding to bide –
Thy spell hath subdued me,
Thy will be my guide!
(*Manfred* I.i: 88-99).

Similarly, Mont Blanc, even if personified as “the monarch of mountains” (I.i: 60), is suggested as animated by the Second Spirit, who commands “him” when to let fall an avalanche. In addition, nature is explicitly presented as inanimate:

The Glacier's cold and restless mass
Moves onward day by day;
But I am he who bids it pass,
Or with its ice delay
(I.i: 68-71).

Thus, the notion of “the Spirit of each spot” (*CHP* III: 705) reveals itself as “Greek” much rather than “Wordsworthian” (e.g. Robinson, 42).

Sailing out of the port of Meillerie, Byron and Shelley experienced a dangerous squall, described by Byron in a much later letter to Murray from Venice (15 May 1819):

[Shelley] was once with me in a gale of Wind in a small boat right under the rocks between Meillerie & St. Gingo (sic) – we were five in the boat – a servant – two boatmen - & ourselves. The Sail was mismanaged & the boat was filling fast – he can't swim. – I stripped off my coat – made him strip off his - & take hold of an oar – telling him that I thought (being myself an expert swimmer) I could save him if he would not struggle when I took hold of him – unless we got smashed against the rocks which were high & sharp with an awkward Surf on them at that minute (. . .) He answered me with the greatest coolness – “that he had no notion of being saved - & that I would have enough to do to save myself, and begged not to trouble me”. – Luckily the boat righted & baled (sic) we got round a point into St. Gingo – where the Inhabitants came down and embraced the boatmen on their escape (*BLJ* VI, 126).

Shelley's careless attitude to life seemed to have mirrored that previously espoused by Byron himself. On the night between 7 and 8 November 1809, while sailing across the

Ambracian Gulf on his return from his mission on Ali Pasha's court, Byron experienced a squall, described in a subsequent letter to his mother:

Two days ago I was nearly lost in a Turkish ship of war owing to the ignorance of the captain and crew though the storm was not violent. – Fletcher yelled after his wife, the Greeks called on all the Saints, the Mussulmen on Alla, the Captain burst into tears and ran below deck telling us to call on God, the sails were split, the mainyard shivered, the wind blowing fresh, the night setting in, and all our chance was to make Corfu which is in possession of the French, or (as Fletcher *pathetically* termed it, “a watery grave.” — I did what I could to console Fletcher but finding him incorrigible wrapped myself up in my Albanian capote (an immense cloak) and lay down on deck to await the worst ... (*BLJ* I, 229).³⁶

In the First Act of *Manfred*, the Fifth Spirit simultaneously refers to the Horatian trope of a squall-provoking deity, paraphrased by Shelley, and to their recent squall:

I am the Rider of the wind,
The Stirrer of the storm;
The hurricane I left behind
Is yet with lightning warm;
To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
I swept upon the blast:
The fleet I met sailed well, and yet
'Twill sink ere night be past
(I.i: 100-107).

The motif of squall is reiterated in the lines sung by the Second Voice (Destiny?) in Act II:

The ship sail'd on, the ship sail'd fast,
But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast;
There is not a plank of the hull or the deck,
And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck;
Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the hair,
And he was the subject well worthy my care;
A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea –
But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me!
(II.iii: 26-33).

Typically, the Byronic hero is either a traitor on land or a pirate at sea. The above lines could have been inspired by Byron's Lake tour with Shelley, and by a recall of his previous experience in the Ambracian Gulf. But to return to their Classical intertext, and its projection on their contemporary referentiality.

³⁶ Within a week of the above deluge, Byron recrossed the Ambracian Gulf and wrote *Stanzas, Written in passing the Ambracian gulf, November 14th, 1809*, where he elegizes Cleopatra and the final fall of Hellenistic Greece by using the pastoral tropes of “cloudless skies”, full moon, Orpheus and “sweet Florence” (*CPWI*, p. 278).

iii. *Prometheus*

On their visit to the Castle of Chillon, Byron and Shelley viewed a factual underworld, situated eight hundred feet below the lake surface and supported by seven columns, onto which the prisoners were chained. In Hesiod, Prometheus is said to have been chained on a pillar, while Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* ends with the eponymous hero being swallowed by the erupting Mount Caucasus. Shelley, who saw Prometheus as the prototype of Milton's Satan, noted that the Chillon underworld hosted "those who shook, or who denied the system of idolatry, from the effects of which mankind is even now slowly emerging" (*Letters* II, 497). He concludes with an anti-Christian reference to "the words of great Tacitus" about the Christians, evoked as "*perniciēs humani generis*" (ibid).³⁷ Contrasting Shelley's "imaginary Greek" notion of democracy, Charles Bonivard was not a pagan sceptic, but a historical Swiss patriot who defended the independence of Geneva against the Duke of Savoy. After being incarcerated for six years (probably not in the place as pernicious to health as the infamous underwater dungeon), his previous wealth and honour were only enhanced by official reimbursement for his earlier sufferings. In effect, this mortal Prometheus was restored from hell to Christianity, just as his Greek counterpart eventually made peace with his earlier tormentor, whereupon melting into the prevailing law of the father and disappearing from the symbolic stage of myth. However, Prometheus' "happy end", asserted in the Greek myth, seems at odds with the Platonic notion of spiritual liberation, speculated by Byron and Shelley. Moreover, Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* closes with a catastrophe, the mountain swallowing Prometheus (and presumably the Chorus), and with Prometheus' final lines presenting a scream of agony:

Now in fact, not just in word,
The earth is shaking,
And from its depths there echoes a rumble
Of thunder. Coils of fiery flame flash out.
Whirlwinds set the dust
Spinning. Blasts of all the winds
Leap, clashing convulsively

³⁷ See Tacitus, *Annals* 15: 44. In the said passage, Tacitus describes the six days of great fire in Rome, for which Nero blamed the Christians and subsequently organized a pogrom. Significantly, Manfred will counter the Abbot's suggestions of his return to Christianity by a reference to Nero, discussed in the previous chapter.

In fierce and bitter strife.
Sky and sea are mixed in confusion.
Such a strike comes visibly against me
From Zeus, to make me afraid.
O majesty of Earth, my mother,
O Sky in which the sun's universal light revolves,
Look on me, how unjustly I suffer!
(1080-1093).

Glossing the Titan's last words, Byron's *Prometheus* conflates an Aeschylean intertext and the affliction of the contemporary Cartesian *cogito* (rationalistic - empiricist - sceptical), inherited and epitomized by Prometheus, still oppressed by "the ruling principle of Hate". However, man's Promethean (Cartesian) *cogito* is asserted as a useful weapon, dispossessing "god" of his divinity precisely on the grounds of his mindless cruelty:

All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
Was but the menace which flung back
On his the torments of thy rack;
The fate thou didst so well foresee
But would not to appease him tell;
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
And in his Soul a vain repentance,
And evil dread so ill dissembled
That in his hand the lightnings trembled
(26-34).³⁸

The official religion/god having lost face, man is left with nothing but "a symbol and a sign" of both his "fate and force". In effect, he suffers from a "sad unallied existence", capable of foreseeing "his own funereal destiny" and (only) making the best of it by his

firm will, and a deep sense,
Which even in torture can descry
Its own centered recompense,
Triumphant where it dares defy,
And making Death a Victory
(55-59).

In effect, Byron sympathizes with the Titan for being refused "the boon to die: / The wretched gift eternity / Was thine – and thou hast borne it well" (23-25). The concept of victory in death follows the Greek tragedy, showing a pre-Cartesian human as a plaything of vindictive gods, who in return seem forever busy involving mortals in their divine stratagems. The Greek concept of personal *hubris* (a fatal flaw) as the direct reason for the "gods' envy" of particular humans, and of the resulting *hamartia*

³⁸ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, "Prometheus", *CPW* IV, pp. 31-33 (pp. 31-32).

(misguided action), was revised within Byron's and Shelley's concept of the Cartesian individual, who chooses knowledge and rationality over fear and superstition. Significantly, Plato's Socrates anticipates the Cartesian man in choosing to embrace death, the big unknown, instead of fearing it – precisely on the grounds of his speculative *cogito*, which allows for a possibility that the big unknown might amount to an existential amelioration, or to non-existence. In an earlier letter to Hodgson (3 September 1811), Byron quotes (in Latin) from Seneca that “There is nothing after death, and death itself is nothing. You seek the place where one lives after death? Where those unborn lie”, to which he adds the Greek proverb that “those whom the gods love die young” (*BLJ* II, 89 n1-2). In *Queen Mab*, Shelley espouses a similar attitude to death:

Fear not, then, Spirit, death's disrobing hand,
 So welcome when the tyrant is awake,
 So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch burns;
 'Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour,
 The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep
 (IX: 171-175).

Thus, Shelley presents death as a form of victory, and life as a form of imprisonment, anticipating the notion of victory in death and death (and imprisonment) in life espoused in *The Prisoner of Chillon*, *Prometheus* and *Manfred*. Even if the time of their composition might have overlapped, the former two poems seem to anticipate *Manfred* in respectively offering madness and death as the two means to the ultimate human liberation. As suggested by McGann and Gleckner, *The Prisoner of Chillon* indicates that a state of mind equalling or similar to madness might be the only ultimate freedom allowed a righteous mortal during their lifetime.³⁹ Thus, the poem paves the way for the eponymous hero of *Manfred*, whose pursuits and manner of speech make him appear “mad” in the eyes of the Chamois Hunter (II.i: 59), and whose ultimate message is that “’tis not so difficult to die” (III.iv: 151). Notably, *Manfred* and *Prometheus* share a number of parallels, of which I shall name but the most striking. For instance, both poems argue that suffering targets mortals and immortals alike. In *Manfred*, First Destiny in her defence of Manfred declares that “the passions” are

attributes
 Of earth and heaven, from which no power, nor

³⁹ According to McGann, *The Prisoner of Chillon* “dramatizes the theme of the crippled life” (McGann 1968, pp. 166-167), while Gleckner indicates that the poem “chronicles a slow decay of the human mind in the prison of its being” (Gleckner, p. 191).

being,
Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt
(II.iv: 64-66),

which corresponds to Manfred's previous reiterations of his sense of suffering eternally, for instance: " - I dwell in my despair - / And live – and live forever" (II.ii: 149-150). In *Prometheus*, the immortal Titan is rent by a strife "between the suffering and the will / Which torture where it cannot kill" (16-17), and is refused "even the boon to die" (23). In parallel, Manfred relates of his asking for a "boon" (II.ii: 46), previously phrased as "self-oblivion" (I.i: 144), which he suspects might not equal physical death (I.i: 148). By insisting that he "was my own destroyer, and will be / My own hereafter" (III.iv: 139-140), Manfred effectively dispels the spirits who want to drag him away to the destination of their choice, thus making his death a certain form of victory, following the final lines of *Prometheus*:

Like thee, Man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source;
And Man in portions can foresee
His own funereal destiny;
His wretchedness, and his resistance,
And his sad unallied existence:
To which his Spirit may oppose
Itself – an equal to all woes,
And a firm will, and a deep sense,
Which even in torture can descry
Its own concentrated recompense,
Triumphant where it dares defy,
And making Death a Victory
(47-59).⁴⁰

In effect, the above lines can be read as a preamble of *Manfred*. Further parallels between Manfred and Prometheus will be further discussed in the following chapter. But to continue with Byron's Swiss influences and movements.

Soon after their return from the Lake tour, Shelley proceeded on his tour of Mont Blanc in the company of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and Claire Clairmont, while Byron was joined by Hobhouse and Scrope Berdmore Davies, whose Whig

⁴⁰ According to M. G. Cooke, Byron's Prometheus "can force nothing but a negative determination of the world . . ." (Cooke 1976, p. 79). Shelley's Prometheus, for his part, breaks "out of this negative determination, but in its turn it proceeds by its unfolding of a spontaneous universe which the mind cannot securely keep but must discipline itself to maintain" (ibid). Byron's Manfred anticipates Shelley's Prometheus (as defined by Cooke) in breaking out of *his* negative determination, as I will show in the next chapter. Cooke's view on "Romantic Prometheanism", a concept which depends on "a situation of uncertainty for the mind" (ibid), is overly negative. However, Byron saw freedom and liberation precisely in this uncertainty, as we shall see in Chapter Four.

(Deist) mindset clashed with Shelley's radicalism (atheism).⁴¹ The news of Clairemont's pregnancy by Byron, complemented by the poet's growing intolerance of her, added to the social tension created by Polidori's touchiness. In effect, Shelley occasionally visited the Villa Diodati on his own, whereby sharing his impressions of Mont Blanc with Byron and his friends previous to their excursion to the site.

iv. Greek Zoroastrianism and apocrypha

Describing his standing under Mont Blanc, Shelley addresses Peacock within his epistolary journal:

Do you, who assert the supremacy of Ahriman, imagine him throned among these desolating snows, among these palaces of death and frost, so sculptured in this their terrible magnificence by the adamant hand of necessity, and that he casts around him, as the first essays of his final usurpation, avalanches, torrents, rocks and thunders, and above all those deadly glaciers, at once the proof and symbols of his reign; (*Letters* II, 513).

According to all evidence, *Manfred's* Arimanes was most likely inspired by Shelley's Mont Blanc journal, to which Shelley's *viva voce* elaboration of what "Ahriman" meant to his friend Peacock was added.⁴² Shelley could have easily provided Byron with a compressed version of Peacock's *Ahrimanes*, an epic poem in the Spenserian stanza started early in 1812, when Peacock was living in the proximity of Shelley and his first wife, sharing Shelley's ideas and his circle of friends. At this time, Peacock and Shelley were socializing with John Frank Newton (1767-1837) who in return influenced Shelley's concept of the natural diet (i.e. vegetarianism) and Peacock's Orphic Zoroastrianism.⁴³ Peacock's *Ahrimanes* was published only in 1908, edited by Alfred Button Young within an issue of *Modern Language Review*.⁴⁴ The mythology presented in Peacock's epic was shaped by the belief in Necessity (*ananke*), the highest universal law which, according to the Ancient Greeks, anticipated and transcended the power of Zeus. In Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus states that he will be released from

⁴¹ The rationalistic Whigs abhorred religious fervour as well as atheism, since they were both seen as irrational (Mitchell, p. 124). Hobhouse noted how Byron took care to deface Shelley's description of his occupation as "atheist and philanthropist" (in Greek) in the guest book at the reception of the Hotel d'Angleterre in Chamonix, believing that he was doing Shelley "a service" (*Recollections* II, p. 9).

⁴² See Kenneth Neill Cameron, "Shelley and *Ahrimanes*", *Shelley and His Circle, 1773-1822* (New York: Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection, 1970), III, p. 291 n11.

⁴³ See Felix Felton, *Thomas Love Peacock* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1973), pp. 87-97. Henceforth Felton.

⁴⁴ See Thomas Love Peacock, "Ahrimanes", ed. A. B. Young, *The Modern Language Review* 4.2 (January 1909), 217-230. Henceforth *MLR*.

bonds “only after being broken / By myriad pains and miseries” (512-513), since this was the will of Fate, of Necessity.

CHORUS LEADER:

Who, then, directs the tiller of Necessity?

PROMETHEUS:

The three-formed Fates and remembering Erinyes.

CHORUS-LEADER:

But surely Zeus is not weaker than they are?

PROMETHEUS:

In fact, not even he could escape what is fated.

CHORUS-LEADER:

Yet what is fated but that Zeus hold power forever?

PROMETHEUS:

You'll not learn any more; don't press the point
(515-520).

In Peacock's prose summary of the poem, Necessity is said to administer the world by the help of four principal “*genii*”:⁴⁵ the creator (“El-Oran”), the preserver (“Oromazes”), the destroyer (“Ahrimanes”) and the restorer, who is yet to come (*MLR*, 228). In effect, Ahrimanes is presented as a conflation of all male Olympians headed by Zeus:

When Ahrimanes first assumed his sway over man and the world his *genii* rapidly effected their task of misery and corruption. Blood flowed in feuds and in war at the beck of tyrants and on the altar of superstition where he was worshipped under unnumbered names by the abject and terrified race of man. He delighted in the spectacle of war and desolation: he sent forth beasts of prey and signalled his dominion by storms and earthquakes and volcanoes. Men fell prostrate before him and only seemed emulous who should be his most effectual votaries. But as he threw his glance over the world he discovered that some of the *genii* of Oromazes still lingered among mankind in the mountain-vales and by the shores of the lonely torrents and that some individuals of the human race still resisted his power (*ibid*, 229).

In effect, the past rule of Oromazes parallels the Arcadian pastoral, or the age of Chronos (Saturn) evoked by the Ancient Greeks. This past order is epitomised by *Manfred*'s Chamois Hunter, the dweller of mountain vales obviously unimpressed by contemporary men of rank and lauded by Manfred as the epitome of immanent pastoral virtues. In creating the Witch of the Alps, the “spirit” in charge of the Staubach waterfall, - a contextual parallel of Peacock's “lonely torrents”, - Manfred apparently seeks a genius of the primordial world order, ruled by Oromazes. The agents of

⁴⁵ Owing to the cultural and territorial expansion of Greek territory and religious customs during the reign of Alexander of Macedon, the notion of the *daemon* merged with that of the Arabic *jinn*, the conflation of which apparently inspired the Roman *genius*.

Ahrimanes in *Manfred* are the three Destinies and, paradoxically, Nemesis, who in her function of goddess of just retribution approximates to Necessity. However, Nemesis-Necessity boasts of

Goading the wise to madness; from the dull
Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh, for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak
Of freedom, the forbidden fruit
(II.iii: 66-71).

Even if one of them mentions having helped “the Captive Usurper” Napoleon escape his prison in Elba to become a “Tyrant again” (II.iii: 16-23), the Destinies indicate that they “only give to take again / The spirits of our slaves” (ibid, 56-57). Let us consider here the issue of Manfred’s alliance, similarly dualistic since he seeks the agents of Oromazes yet professes an alliance with birds of prey (II.i: 36), emblematic of Arimanes. Yet he also states that he “never quell’d / An enemy, save in my just defence” (II.i: 85-86), and evokes a contemporary mundane ruler as “A mighty thing amongst the mean, and such / The mass are” (III.i: 120-121), thus distancing himself from the world run by predatories. This paradox can be clarified by going back to Peacock’s *Ahrimanes*, where Necessity is said to have given the eponymous god the dual task to “shake the world with war, and rouse the power of mind” (I: xviii). In effect, Ahrimanes is the patron of the world’s rulers, who shed blood on a regular basis, but also of progressive artists and intellectuals like Peacock, Shelley, Byron, and of those who strive for knowledge like Manfred. Peacock evokes Ahrimanes as a solar deity, thereby taking his names and functions from Enlightened Orientalist approach to myth, previously espoused by Jones and Clarke:⁴⁶

‘For him on earth unnumbered temples rise,
And altars burn, and bleeding victims die:
Albeit the sons of men his name disguise
In other names that choice or chance supply,
To him alone their incense soars on high.
The god of armies-the avenging god—
Seva or Allah-Jove or Mars they cry:
'Tis Ahrimanes still that wields the rod;
To him all nature bends, and trembles at his nod.

⁴⁶ According to Clarke, the names “Sol, Mithras, Osiris, Ammon, and Belus” were synonymous with Jupiter (Clarke 1803, p. 116).

'Yea, even on Oromazes' self they call,
 But Ahrimanes hears their secret prayer.
 Not in the name that from the lips may fall,
 But in the thought the heart's recesses bear
 The sons of earth the power they serve declare.
 Wherever priests awake the battle-strain,
 And bid the torch of persecution glare,
 And curses ring along the vaulted fane-
 Call on what name they may-their god is Ahrimane
 (*Ahrimanes* I: xxv-vi).

In *Manfred*, Arimanes is hailed in a reiteration of the above lines:

Hail to our Master! – Prince of Earth and Air! –
 Who walks the clouds and waters – in his hand
 The sceptre of the elements, which tear
 Themselves to chaos at his high command!
 He breatheth – and a tempest shakes the sea;
 He speaketh – and the clouds reply in thunder;
 He gazeth – from his glance the sunbeams flee;
 He moveth – earthquakes rend the world asunder.
 Beneath his footsteps the volcanos rise;
 His shadow is the Pestilence; his path
 The cometh herald through the crackling skies;
 And planets turn to ashes at his wrath.
 To him War offers daily sacrifice;
 To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his,
 With all its infinite of agonies -
 And his the spirit of whatever is!
 (II.iv: 1-16).

Evoked as “Prince of Earth and Air”, with “Earth” symbolizing mundane rulership (epitomised by Zeus) and “Air” standing for the realm of inspiration (represented by Apollo), Byron’s Arimanes can cause earthquakes like the Greek Poseidon. From Peacock’s *Ahrimanes*, “to whom all nature bends and trembles at his nod”, Manfred is urged to “bow down and worship . . . tremble, and obey”, and to

Prostrate thyself, and thy condemned
 clay,
 Child of the Earth! or dread the worst
 (II.iv: 34-35).

Given his Grecian belief in Necessity, as well as of his Cartesian *cogito*, since the Earth forms part of a larger galactic whole, Manfred is justified in retorting:

Bid *him* bow down to that which is above him,
 The overruling Infinite – the Maker
 Who made him not for worship - let him kneel,
 And we will kneel together
 (II.iv: 46-49).

Albeit nominally the agent and epitome of an “overruling Infinite”, Nemesis is morally dubious (at least from a human perspective), and her sovereignty is questionable since she seems to speak and invoke the dead on behalf of Arimanes, whose work and function she is supposed to supervise. Worse, she seems to grow larger in the global wars and disasters, chanting with the three Destinies:

Sovereign of Sovereigns! we are thine,
And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,
And most things wholly so; still to increase
Our power increasing thine, demands our care,
And we are vigilant –
(II.iv: 23-27).

Thus, Byron reiterates the symbiotic relationship of Zeus, Necessity and the Fates in Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* in a darkly satirical way. In the context of Manfred’s intention to search for the deceased Astarte, Nemesis and Arimanes parallel Persephone and Hades. In Greek myth, the virgin Kore mutated into Persephone by accepting Hades as her husband. In a parallel suggested by Taylor’s *Dissertation*, Nemesis can be seen as fallen from a higher cosmic sphere into a lower dimension, no longer a goddess of just retribution on the grounds of her symbiotic relationship with Arimanes. As in *Prometheus*, Manfred’s only chance within a universe headed by a corrupt hierarchy is the belief in his own firm will and deep sense, namely, in the power of his own mind.

According to Marilyn Butler, Peacock’s *Ahrimanes* and Shelley’s *Queen Mab* espoused “a kind of [mythic] orientalism” unparalleled in Byron’s *Oriental Tales*, wherein “the classic tale was not poetic fancy but religious myth, a means of conveying a universal truth through allegory” (Butler, 1981, 121):

Imitation of a mythological antecedent inhibited introspection by the individual author ... Instead it dramatized and objectified a truth, and so allowed for an intellectuality which Byron’s [*Oriental Tales*] did not (ibid).

Before meeting Shelley, Byron was familiar with authors who drew on Greek myth (e.g. Taylor, Drummond, Clarke, Jones). However, Shelley and Peacock provided Byron with precisely what Butler argues he thus far lacked – namely a solution as to how to dramatize an abstract idea. Following Peacock, Byron created a “mixed mythology of my own” espoused in *Manfred*. In Note 2 to Chapter IV of his subsequent novel *Nightmare Abbey* (1818) Peacock is peevishly dismissive of *Manfred*’s mythological world, probably given Peacock’s anxiety of influence over the ideas

recycled in *Manfred*.⁴⁷ Even if Byron and Shelley immediately recognized their satirical *alia* in *Nightmare Abbey* (i.e. “Scythrop” and “Cypress”), they were not offended, and Byron effectively sent Peacock a rosebud and a message that he bore him no ill will. Peacock, in his turn, had the rosebud mounted in an oval gold locket with an inscription, “From Byron to T. L. Peacock, 1819”. He never spoke ill of Byron again (Felton, 155). Peacock’s *Ahrimanes* is but one of the many works appropriating Zoroastrianism in a Greek manner which Byron came across during the time of *Manfred*’s composition.

On 13 November 1816, Byron and Hobhouse visited the Armenian Catholic monastery of St Lazarus (San Lazzaro) in Venice (Marchand II, 671 n4), where they met a community of dedicated scholars who fought for the autonomy of Armenia by reaffirming her culture. The monastery had an impressive library, containing many editions of Greek apocrypha, many of which offered a comparative survey of Hellenistic historical records, Eastern Mediterranean myth and Biblical stories. Apparently, Peacock’s and Shelley’s iconoclastic approach to myth and religious “truths” inspired Byron on a bout of what might be called, Oriental Philhellenism, in the context of which he translated St Paul’s apocryphal letters from the Armenian as if to suit *Manfred*’s premise of the divine self-sufficiency of one’s own mind. Given his own attempt to help the contemporary Greeks by providing information on their Romaic literature, Byron was impressed by the Mechitarist initiative, and immediately asked the monks if he could live in the monastery.⁴⁸ He was refused the privilege on the grounds of his being a complete stranger to the monks. Instead, he was invited to visit the monastery on a daily basis in order to read and study. In addition, he was asked if he could help Father Harutin Avgerian (Paschal Aucher) collate his two editions of Armenian grammar. In effect, he collated, financed and propagated two respective editions of the Mechitarists, *Grammar English and Armenian Textbook* (1817), and

⁴⁷ Thus Peacock: “According to Mr Toobad, the present period would be the reign of Ahrimanes. Lord Byron seems to be of the same opinion, by the use he has made of Ahrimanes in ‘*Manfred*’; where the great Alastor, or *Κακοζ Δαιμων*, of Persia, is hailed king of the world by the Nemesis of Greece, in concert with three of Scandinavian Valkyrae, under the name of the Destinies; the astrological spirits of the alchemists of the middle ages; an elemental witch, transplanted from Denmark to the Alps; and a chorus of Dr Faustus’ devils, who come in the last set for a soul. It is difficult to conceive where this heterogeneous mythological company could have originally met, except at a *table d’hote*, like the six kings in ‘*Candide*’”. See Thomas Love Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey / Crotchet Castle*, ed. Raymond Wright (London: Penguin English Library, 1969. Repr. London: Penguin Classics, 1986), pp. 263-264.

⁴⁸ See Anahit Bekarian, *Byron’s “Armenian” Letters* (Yerevan: NAS RA, 2001), p. 105. Henceforth Bekarian.

Grammar Armenian and English Textbook (1819) (Bekarian 151 n5).⁴⁹ During his daily visits to the monastery in the autumn and winter of 1816, Byron took lessons in Armenian. Again, his studies of an Oriental language spoken within the realm of Ottoman Turkey recalled his previous lessons in Arabic while in Malta, and in Romaic Greek while in Ioannina and Athens, where he similarly collaborated with his tutor in Romaic Greek, Ioannis Marmarotouri. In addition, the monastic atmosphere of St Lazarus brought back Byron's memories of the Capuchin monastery in Athens, where he lived from August 1810 until March 1811, writing prolifically, studying Romaic Greek and the Arnaout dialect while living amongst the teenagers from the Athenian Frank families. While he was previously writing *CHP* I-II, *Hints from Horace* and *The Curse of Minerva*, he was now writing *Manfred* in the monastery's garden. Peter Cochran suggests a parallel between Manfred, who is presented as a scholar in pursuit of hidden knowledge, and Byron, who took daily lessons in a difficult and exotic language, indicating that Byron wrote to Murray that he took up Armenian lessons because he "found it necessary to twist my mind rounds some severe study – and this – as being the hardest I could devise here – will be a file for the serpent" (*BLJ* V, 137).⁵⁰

Byron's "Armenian enterprise" of collating and financing Avgerian's two grammars could be seen as a form of atonement for his previous sympathy for the Turks, if not for his patronizing attitude to the contemporary Greeks, expressed in the Appendix to *CHP* I-II. His Preface to the second edition of Avgerian's grammar (1819) reiterates Byron's poor opinion of the contemporary Greeks in stating that the monks of St Lazarus "are the priesthood of an oppressed and noble nation, which has partaken of the proscription and bondage of the Jews and of the Greeks, without the sullenness of the former or the servility of the latter" (*CMP*, 67). Furthermore, Byron's identifying Armenia as (one-time) site of Biblical Paradise provides a parallel with a pastoral Arcadia:

⁴⁹ On Byron's financing the edition, see *BLJ* V, pp. 142, 156, and *BLJ* X, p. 112. On Byron's canvassing for the Armenian cause, see *BLJ* VI, pp. 9, 29. On Byron's wish to publish his translations of St Paul's Epistles from the Armenian, see *BLJ* VII, p. 60, and *BLJ* VIII, p. 237.

⁵⁰ Peter Cochran, "The Serpent Bites the File: Byron and the Armenians", n.d. [c 2010], *International Byron Society*, <http://www.internationalbyronsociety.org/images/stories/pdf_files/byron_armenians.pdf> [Accessed on 6 June 2011], p. 6. Henceforth Cochran 2010. Once again, Byron's intertext is Classical, alluding to Aesop's fable of a serpent trying to swallow a file in the blacksmith's forge. In effect, the file, who is the master of all metals in the forge, proclaims that if one struggles with a superior power one will always come off worse. In a parallel with Byron biting into the difficult Armenian language, Manfred bites into forbidden knowledge, but appears to wrestle away a victory from powers that term themselves superior throughout the play (Cochran 2010, p. 6).

This people have attained riches without usury, and all the honours that can be awarded to slavery without intrigue. But they have long occupied “the house of Bondage,” who has lately multiplied her many mansions. It would be difficult, perhaps, to find the annals of a nation less stained with crimes than those of the Armenians, whose virtues have been those of piece, and their vices those of compulsion . . . (ibid).

Since Byron evoked “the satraps of Persia and the pachas (sic) of Turkey” as the destroyers of Armenia (ibid), the Mekhitarists objected to Byron’s Preface, suspecting that it might complicate the political situation of Armenia, at that time still ruled by the Ottoman Empire (Bekarian, 135).⁵¹ In effect, Byron discontinued his Armenian lessons, using a subsequent bout of fever as a convenient excuse for the interruption (*BLJ* V, 179). However, he remained on cordial terms with the Mechitarist monks for the rest of his life.

With Avgerian’s help, Byron translated from Latin the third Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, the answer of the Corinthians to the Apostle, and, in Bekarian’s terms, “some extracts of our Fathers’ ancient works” (Bekarian, 136).⁵² He intended to include those translations into the second edition of Avgerian’s grammar, provided for the English-speaking students of Armenian (ibid). Writing to Moore in the same letter, Byron stated: “There are some very curious MSS. In the monastery, as well as books; translations also from Greek originals, now lost, and from Persian and Syriac, &c; besides works of their own people” (*BLJ* V, 137). The Armenians used the Greek and Persian alphabets, the former losing secular importance after the division of Armenia between the Persians and the Romans, and used primarily by the clerics (*CMP*, 338 n2). Since Byron was at that time depending on Avgerian on the assessment of Armenian texts, the translations from lost Greek originals he refers to were most probably in Latin, in which he was fluent.⁵³ One of Byron’s schoolworks was a translation from *Armenian History* (authored by Moses Corenensis), consisting of a fragment relating to Alexander the Great and his brother, the king of Armenia:

⁵¹ In effect, the “pachas of Turkey” are suggestive of the two Albanian pashas who had showered Byron with kindness in 1809/10, respectively, Ali Pasha in Tepelene and his son Veli in Tripolitza. See *BLJ* II, pp. 9-11, 16, 19, 22.

⁵² In a letter to Moore (31 March 1817), Byron wrote: “Did I tell you that I translated two Epistles? – a correspondence between St. Paul and the Corinthians, not to be found in our version, but in the Armenian – but which seems to me very orthodox, and I have done it into scriptural prose English” (*BLJ* V, p. 201).

⁵³ Byron’s handwritten words from the copy of Armenian grammar in Moore’s possession, referring to the two apocryphal letters from Armenian Scripture which he translated, concede that he might have been depending on Latin translations of the said apocrypha: “Done into English by me, January, February, 1817, at the Convent of San Lazzaro, with the aid and exposition of the Armenian text by the Father Paschal Aucher, Armenian friar. – BYRON. I had also . . . the Latin text, but it is in many places very corrupt, and with great omissions” (*Life*, pp. 348 n, 659 n1). Also *CMP*, p. 76.

This Volume was translated from the chaldaic (sic) language into greek (sic), by order of Alexander, and contains the authentic history of the Antients and our Ancestors, who are said to commence with Zeruanus, Titan, and Apetosthes; in this book each of these three celebrated men and their posterity are registered in order each in his proper place for many years (*CMP*, 69).

According to Andrew Nicholson, “Zeruanus, Titan and Apetosthes” suggest the Biblical Shem, Ham and Japheth (Genesis 10), as corroborated by Corenensis’ additional reference to “Semus, Chamus & Japhethus”, where the first is identified as the forefather of the Hebrews, the second, of the Assyrians, and the third, of the Armenians (*CMP*, 343).⁵⁴ According to Hesiod, Prometheus was the son of the Titan Iapethus (*Theogony* 507-616). Thus, Prometheus becomes the first Armenian, and his being crucified on the Armenian Mount Caucasus provides the mythopoetic parallel with the Oriental Greek apocrypha currently read by Byron. In effect, Byron could conflate the Armenian cause with that of Prometheus. In addition, he remembered Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters* which, as mentioned in the first chapter, featured the story of the Armenian siblings, Apheridon and Astarte, who are also husband and wife. Thus, Byron could Orientalize Plato’s *Kalon* and the Eleusinian concept of twinned souls according to the premises of his own “mixed mythology”.⁵⁵

Apparently, Byron’s decision to translate the apocryphal version of St Paul’s Corinthian correspondence arose from a desire to establish an oxymoronic niche of Oriental Philhellenism, with Armenia standing in for the lost Greek imaginary, and for the nation fathered by none other than Prometheus. This plan was consistent with his previous efforts in studying the contemporary literature and spoken languages of Oriental Greece, and with his subsequent aim of becoming “a good Oriental scholar”,

⁵⁴ According to Cochran, Byron translated a fifth-century AD text called, *De Deo* by Eznik of Kolb, narrating the myth of Zervanus (Zeruan), the parent of Ormuzd and Ahriman. The translation was included in the original edition of the grammar, but subsequently omitted from its revised edition of 1832. Thus the myth of Zervanus: “They say, that before the creation of heaven and earth and their creatures Zervanus existed, which being interpreted signifies *fortune*, or *glory*. He sacrificed a thousand years that a son might be born to him who should create heaven and earth and whatever in them is. And after this sacrifice of a thousand years, he began thus to meditate: Will this sacrifice profit me? and produce my son Hormistus, or do I labour in vain? And, during this meditation, Hormistus and Harminus were conceived in the womb of their mother; Hormistus by sacrifice, but Harminus by doubt” (Cochran 2010, p. 5). Unfortunately, the twin conceived in doubt was born sooner than the one who was elder by conception. Hence, Harminus (Ahriman) was given rulership for the subsequent nine thousand years. After the expiry of that time, Ormuzd, higher and wiser than Harminus, shall finally come to rule according to the original wish of their parent (*ibid*).

⁵⁵ In Manfred’s lines to the sun, the Greek Titans can be seen reiterated as the Biblical “angels” who in return begot the sons of Elohim (Genesis 6), “the giant sons / Of the embrace of angels, with the sex more beautiful than they” (*Manfred* III.ii: 6-7). In the context of Greek myth, the latter might approximate to minor deities of nature, the nymphs, discussed in Chapter Two.

stated in the letter to Hodgson (*BLJ* II, 163), quoted earlier. In effect, Byron probably wanted to promote his Oriental scholarship through the translation of a text as canonical as that of St Paul the Apostle, who was one of the most eminent Greek scholars of his day, by “freeing” it from later layers of (mis)readings on the part of successive church fathers. In the first of the two Epistles translated by Byron, of which he wrote to Scrope Berdmore Davies that it existed “in the Armenian version of the Scriptures – not in *ours*” (*BLJ* XI, 164), the two “impure men”, Simon and Cleobus, suggest a parallel with the Biblical Simon Magus (Acts 8: 9-24), commonly taken as the anticipator of the Faustian legends (Fitzsimmons 2012, 41). In the apocryphal letter translated by Byron, Simon and Cleobus are said to have come to Corinth to teach the following:

- 10 That it behoves not to admit the Prophets.
- 11 Neither do they affirm the omnipotence of God:
- 12 Neither do they affirm the resurrection of the flesh:
- 13 Neither do they affirm that man was altogether created by God:
- 14 Neither do they affirm that Jesus Christ was born in the flesh from the Virgin Mary:
- 15 Neither do they affirm that the world was the work of God, but of some one of the angels
(*CMP*, 70-71).⁵⁶

Apparently, the two men were termed “impure” because they espoused an approach kindred to Greek scepticism with regard to the newly-established Christian hierarchy, which they did not “affirm” without reserve, but speculated about an alternative spiritual (*ergo* “angelic”) provenance of the universe. The term “angels” used in Byron’s translation apparently denotes non-physical entities, as it does in *Manfred*, where the spirits are alternatively called, “genii” and “angels”. In effect, Byron seems to follow Simon and Cleobus in acknowledging the spiritual manipulation of Earth on the part of various entities as a matter of fact. However, Manfred refutes the power of his “genius” and their “surrounding angels” only to appropriate it for himself. Namely, his mind is immortal and effectively makes itself

Requital for its good or evil thoughts –
Is its own origin of ill and end –
And its own place and time –

⁵⁶ The world as dominion of the “angels” – the Greek term *angelos* (the messenger) allowing for a broad span of Classical iterations, including *daimones*, *daemones* or *genii* – is espoused in *Heaven and Earth* (I: 36-40, III: 596-530). Regarding the latter drama, Byron declared the following in a letter to Douglas Kinnaid (16 November 1821): “Recollect that I carefully avoid *all profane* allusion to *the Deity* – and as for Saints – Angels – and demons – they have been a sprightly people since the Wife of Bath[’s] times – and Lucian’s even till now” (*BLJ* IX, p. 62). The same sceptical principles, and notion of non-material entities, seem to have guided his earlier composition of *Manfred*.

(III.iv: 130-132).

Thus, Cochran's claim that the "heresy" set out by Simon and Cleobus also inspired Byron in the creation of Manfred (Cochran 2010, 7-8) seems more than justified. Moreover, St Paul's answer to the above letter apparently reiterates Manfred's above lines in stating the following:

- 34 Therefore they who affirm that there is no resurrection of the flesh, they
indeed shall not be raised into eternal life;
35 But to judgement and condemnation shall the unbeliever arise in the flesh:
36 For to that body which denies the resurrection of the body, shall be denied
the resurrection: because such are found to refuse the resurrection
(CMP, 74).

Rephrased, one's mind *is* requital for its good or evil thoughts, to the point of being able to accept or refuse an offered resurrection. Especially the last sentence seems to foreground Manfred's belief in a potentially inviolable human mind. In its ability to refuse resurrection, the human mind potentially has divine powers. In effect, St Paul's apocryphal words can be used in proof of Byron's claim that a mortal's "firm will" and "deep sense" can, and indeed will, make death a victory, and that the unbelievers might, after all, be granted a Socratic "eternal sleep", as Byron personally hoped death might amount to.

IN SEARCH FOR "A PASTORAL FABLE": BYRON'S ALPINE TOURS

On their arrival to Diodati, Hobhouse and Scrope Berdmore Davies brought Byron the requested edition of Taylor's Pausanias, as well a French translation of Johann Gottfried Ebel's *Anleitung, auf die nützlichste und genussvollste Art in der Schweiz zu reisen* (1793).⁵⁷ As the title of the work suggests, Byron and his friend were intent on *utile dulci* following Horace, or *seria ludo* from the Dilettanti. Rephrased, they were intent on viewing the contemporary Swiss landscape through a picturesque lens, in order to recreate a pastoral idyll from their Classical textbooks. Despite their search for

⁵⁷ See George Gordon, Lord Byron and John Cam Hobhouse, "The Alpine Journals of Lord Byron and John Cam Hobhouse" [transcription from, respectively: *The Works of Lord Byron: Letters and Journals*, ed. R.E. Prothero, (London: John Murray 1899), iii, pp. 349-365; *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand (London: John Murray 1976), v, pp. 96-105 (Byron's Alpine Journal); John Clubbe and Ernest Giddey, *Byron et la Suisse: Deux Etudes* (Geneva, Librairie Droz, 1982); British Library, Addington MS.56536-7], ed. Peter Cochran, n.d. [c 2010], *International Byron Society*, <http://www.internationalbyronsociety.org/images/stories/pdf_files/alpine.pdf> [Accessed on 12 June 2011], pp. 11, 23. Henceforth Hobhouse 1816.

the pastoral, they were inevitably faced with real nature, its dangers and its discomforts, and with the evidence of human vulnerability and finiteness with regard to much stronger and sturdier natural realms.⁵⁸ The reality of nature made Byron seek refuge in a Classical Alpine epistemology, where the Alps are “*saevae*” and “*gelidae*” as soon as their pastoral belt is left behind.

On 29 August 1816, Byron, Hobhouse, Polidori and Scrope Berdmore Davies, who had arrived with Hobhouse, went on a three-day excursion to Mont Blanc. Although he earlier declared himself impressed with the mountain, Byron returned from the excursion without lyrical descriptions, flatly writing to Augusta that he had bought a few semi-precious stones for her and her children (*BLJ* V, 91). Despite Byron’s silence, the tour was quite eventful, including Byron’s dangerous slide down an ice-ridge of a glacier (*Recollections* II, 8), and their joint scrambling “up to the stream [of *Mer de Glace*], under the ice masses”, despite being warned “not to approach the fountain under the ice itself, as the glaciers are never tranquil” (*ibid*, 10). Putting their heads under the overarching ice, they “saw the rushing fountains below for a moment” (*ibid*). Given his proximity to the Natural Sublime, Byron was left speechless, his letters giving no description similar to Shelley’s impressions of Mont Blanc, viewed from a picturesque distance:

From this glacier we saw, as we sat on a rock, close to one of the streams of the Erveiron, masses of ice detach themselves from on high, and rush with a loud dull noise into the vale. The violence of their fall turned them into powder, which flowed over the rocks in imitation of waterfalls, whose ravines they usurped and filled. (. . .) The verge of a glacier, like that of Bossons, presents the most vivid image of desolation that it is possible to conceive. No one dares to approach it; for the enormous pinnacles of ice which perpetually fall are perpetually reproduced. The pines of the forest, which bound it at one extremity, are overthrown and shattered, to a wide extent, at its base. There is something inexpressibly dreadful in the aspect of the few branchless trunks which, nearest to the ice fronts, still stand in the uprooted soil (*Letters* II, 511-512).

This violent description of falling glaciers might have contributed to the evocation of “the elements, which tear / Themselves to chaos at [Arimanes’] high command” in *Manfred* (II.iv: 3-4). Following Shelley, Byron narrows down his focus to the ruined pine trees in *Manfred*:

⁵⁸ On their Mont Blanc excursion, Byron and his friends saw a monument to a German poet and expeditionist who had fallen into the crevasse of Bouet. See John Cam Hobhouse, Lord Broughton, *Recollections of a Long Life*, ed. Lady Dorchester, 6 vols (London: John Murray, 1909), vol II, p. 11. Henceforth *Recollections* II.

To be thus -
 Grey-hair'd with anguish, like these blasted pines,
 Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,
 A blighted trunk upon a cursed root,
 Which but supplies a feeling to decay –
 And to be thus, eternally but thus,
 Having been otherwise!
 (I.ii: 65-71).⁵⁹

During his Alpine Tour with Hobhouse (16 - 28 September 1816), Byron revisited the lake surroundings of Vaud, comprising Ouchy, Lausanne, Vevey, Montreux and Chillon (17/18 September 1816), originally sighted from afar during his Lake tour with Shelley. He could not reach the summit of Dent de Jaman, since he tumbled from his mule in the attempt (*BLJ* V, 98-99). Still, as he admitted, the instance was superior to his earlier Greek impressions, where the Arnaout (Oriental) brigand-shepherds clashed with the “pastoral existence”, “heard or imagined”:

The whole of the Mountain superb – the shepherd on a very steep & high cliff playing upon his *pipe* – very different from *Arcadia* – (where I saw the pastors with a long Musquet instead of a Crook – and pistols in their Girdles) (. . .) the Shepherds’ shouting to us from crag to crag & playing on their reeds where the steeps appeared almost inaccessible, with the surrounding scenery – realized all that I have ever heard or imagined of a pastoral existence – much more so than Greece or Asia Minor – for there we are a little too much of the sabre & musquet order – and if there is a Crook in one hand, you are sure to see a gun in the other (*BLJ* V, 99).

In concluding the above passage of his diary with the statement that he “lately repeopled his mind with Nature”, Byron admits to a wilful personification of nature. Apparently, Byron wants “nature” to look like it “should”, namely Classical, at the far end of a vantage point from where it could be patronized by personification (e.g. given the “epaulettes of clouds”), as in the case of Mount Hockthorn, described as

a mountain with enormous Glaciers to the right – the Kletsgerberg – further on – the Hockthorn – nice names – so soft – Hockthorn I believe very lofty & craggy – patched with snow only – no Glaciers on it – but some good epaulettes of clouds (*BLJ* V, 100).

The music of the shepherds’ “reeds” is recycled in *Manfred* in the following lines:

The natural music of the mountain reed –
 For here the patriarchal days are not
 A pastoral fable – pipes in the liberal air,

⁵⁹ Compare with Byron’s Alpine Journal entry (23 September 1816): “Passed *whole woods of withered pines, all withered*; trunks stripped and barkless, branches lifeless; done by a single winter, - their appearance reminded me of me and my family” (*BLJ* V, p. 102).

Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;
My soul would drink those echoes
(I.ii: 48-52).⁶⁰

Byron's above pledge to the heritage of his Greek imaginary, evoked by the metaphors of "pipes in the liberal air", "patriarchal days", "pastoral fable" and – most tellingly – "echoes", evoking the associative reiteration of a past tense, is complemented by the projection of the imaginary citizen of Ancient Athens in the person of the Chamois Hunter, "a peasant of the Alps", who has no paragon amongst the Swiss commoners Byron met while in the Alps or on his Lake tour. Quite the contrary, if we bear in mind Shelley's previous description of the Vaud area and its inhabitants. Manfred's following paean is conditioned by tropes from Hesiod, Homer, Plato, Pindar, Theocritus, and their Roman imitators:

Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud and free;
Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts;
Thy days of health, and nights of sleep; thy toils,
By danger dignified, yet guiltless; hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,
With cross and garland over its green turf,
And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph;
This do I see –
(II.i: 64-72).

In contrast to his Greek contemporary, who is an Ottoman (Oriental) serf and who betrays no signs of political emancipation, the Chamois Hunter is a Swiss, raised in a country which approximated to the Western-European notion of Athenian democracy so much more than contemporary Greece. However, Manfred breaks the frame of pastoral democracy in his attempt to patronize the free-born peasant because of the latter's "lower" race, evoked as "brutes of burthen" and "dust" (II.i: 36-37). This attitude corresponds to that of the Classical Greek oligodemocracy, as well as to that of its subsequent appropriators, the Goths from Spain and Italy whom Hobhouse calls "Latin" (*Travels* I, 219). Thus, Manfred evokes the historical Rutger von Blum, whose Gothic castle might have been so much more appropriate in the landscape of Switzerland, not so much on the grounds of an ethnic parallel, evident in their Germanic names, but on their patrician legacy, passed down from the Ancient Greeks to their successive

⁶⁰ Byron noted cynically on the margin of the play's manuscript: "With regard to the 'pastoral life' of the Alps – there is but little – I reserve that some day or other – for another subject, yrs etc.etc.-", at the end of the scene (*CPW* IV, p. 471).

conquerors. The conflation of Greek and Gothic contexts was further suggested as Byron and Hobhouse progressed towards the Jungfrau. At Neuhaus, “a large stone, apparently detached from the crags above” commemorated the fratricide committed by “the Lord of Rotenfluh, whom justice had destroyed, and razed his castles” (Hobhouse 1816, 13). By cryptically noting that the site was “just the place fit for it” (*BLJ* V, 100), Byron attests to the sinister air of the site. Hobhouse noted that Neuhaus reminded him of “Utraikee”/ Loutraki (Hobhouse 1816, 13), which similarly consisted of one single house and an air reeking of past bloodshed.⁶¹ In effect, the inevitable parallels between a “barbaric” feudal Switzerland and Oriental Greece facilitated the plot of *Manfred*, the inspiration of which has been traced from the Classical tropes and from Byron’s Levantine sojourn. However, Byron’s second Alpine tour with Hobhouse, which allowed for the creation of a “pastoral fable” and of *quasi*-Grecian myth, was in Byron’s subsequent words the “a-ha” moment for *Manfred* (*BLJ* V, 268) – at least for its first two Acts. In this context, Byron’s repeated viewing of the Staubach waterfall at the foot of the Jungfrau mountain, respectively, in a rainy afternoon and on a sunny morning (22/23 September 1816), attests to a wish to capture a visual impression approximating to his Greek imaginary. Apparently, the Helvetian waterfall provided Byron with the impression that he had hoped to receive from his earlier visit to Parnassus. As stated earlier, the prehistoric worship of the cataract as the source of poetic and prophetic inspiration was espoused in nympholeptic cults and by the Pythian oracle, extolled in Classical texts. Shelley’s Mont Blant journal describes a Maglan waterfall within a similarly “nympholeptic” context:

falling from an overhanging “brow” of a black precipice on an enormous rock, precisely resembling some colossal Egyptian statue of a female deity. It struck the head of the visionary image, and gracefully dividing there, fell from it in folds of foam more like a cloud than water, imitating a veil of most exquisite woof (*Letters* II, 507-508).

Ascending further toward Chamonix, Shelley saw another cascade, “an immense body of waterfall”,

dashing from rock to rock, and casting a spray which formed a mist around it, in the midst of which hung a multitude of sunbows, which faded or became unspeakably vivid, as the inconstant sun shone through the clouds (*ibid*, 508).

⁶¹ See *Travels* I, pp. 162-165. Hobhouse noted in his travel journal that fifteen days before their arrival, “thirtyfive (sic) robbers made their appearance close to the house and carried off a Turk and a Greek, the former of whom they shot, and the latter of whom they stoned, on a small green spot at the bottom of the bay (by way of bravado, as we heard)” (Hobhouse 1809, p. 97).

During his second viewing of the Staubach, Byron seems to have deliberately sought to recreate Shelley's earlier impression of the Maglan waterfall, effectively describing

the Sun upon [the Staubach] forming a *rainbow* of the lower part of all colours – but principally purple and gold – the bow moving as you move (*BLJ* V, 101),

in his epistolary journal to Augusta Leigh. Later, in the Savoy Alps, Byron will seek to recapture the same impression while viewing the Pisse-Vache waterfall:

just passed the “Pisse-Vache -” (one of the finest torrents in Switzerland) – in time to view the Iris – which the Sun flings along it – before Noon (*BLJ* V, 113).

Evidently, Byron took time and effort to see what he wanted to see, subsequently recreating the desired impression by means of an associative displacement, thus making nature “move as he moved” and asserting the power of “mind” over “matter” in Plato's manner. Significantly, before choosing their route to the Jungfrau viewing points, Byron and Hobhouse sought the advice of a young landscape painter from Neufchatel, who in return suggested that they sight the Jungfrau from the neighbouring mountains, since the Alps “appear to mount as you mount” (Hobhouse 1816, 16). Thus, the “Natural Sublime” could be viewed from a safe distance, its impression additionally edited into an adopted perspective. Byron and Hobhouse did not need to strain themselves by a precipitous ascent in order to reach a point which

comprized the *Yung frau* with all her glaciers – then the *Dent d'Argent* – shining like truth – then the *little Giant* (the Kleiner Eigher) & the great Giant (the Grosser Eigher) and last not least – the Wetterhorn (. . .) from where we stood on the *Wengren* Alp – we had all these in view on one side – on the other the clouds rose from the opposite valley curling up perpendicular precipices – like the foam of the Ocean of Hell during a Springtide – it was white & sulphury – and immeasurably deep in appearance – the side we ascended was (of course) not of so precipitous a nature – but on arriving at the summit we looked down the other side upon a boiling sea of cloud – dashing against the crags on which we stood (these crags on one side quite perpendicular (*BLJ* V, 101-102).

This passage is rephrased in *Manfred* within the lines anticipating the hero's suicide attempt:

The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,
Heaped with the damn'd like pebbles
(I.ii: 85-89).

In both examples, parallels with Milton's *Paradise Lost* might be brought to mind.⁶² Milton, for his part, used to survey the same area from his home on the bank of Lake Lemán by using a telescope (Nicolson, 273, 274 n2), which helped him bring about the needed cosmic perspective. Byron again resorts to a telescopic (Miltonic) perspective when describing the Simplon pass in a letter to Murray (15 October 1816):

The Simplon is magnificent in its nature and it's (sic) art – both God & Man have done wonders – to say nothing of the Devil – who must certainly have had a hand (or a hoof) in some of the rocks & ravines through & over which the works are carried (*BLJ* V, 115).

Apparently, Byron felt the need to defy man's smallness before the Natural Sublime by assuming a divine (i.e. telescopic) perspective, and to resort to mythopoetic tropes. This telescopic vision, asserting the man-determined concept of "Nature" (i.e. universe) is subsequently used in *TVOJ*, as facetiously owned in the last stanza of the poem.⁶³ The telescopic perspective wrenches away the power (and danger) from real nature, as well as from the god(s). Thus, the human who surveys the vast panorama through a telescopic lens perceives what approximates to a mindscape, a subjective vision of heaven and hell.

Towards the end of their Alpine tour (28 September 1816), near Aubonne, Byron and Hobhouse saw a castle in the Oriental style similar to the buildings of Acarnania and Epirus, built by the French Orientalist Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1607-1689). "Here [Tavernier] finished his voyages - and I this little excursion", wrote Byron to Augusta Leigh (*BLJ* V, 104), even if conceding that their tour was one day short of conclusion. He continues:

I am a lover of Nature – and an Admirer of Beauty – I can bear fatigue - & welcome privation – and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. – But in all this – the recollections of bitterness - & more especially of recent & more home desolation – which must accompany me through life – have preyed upon me here – and neither the music of the Shepherd – the crashing of the Avalanche – nor the torrent – the mountain – the Glacier – the Forest – nor the Cloud – have for one moment – lightened the weight upon my heart – nor

⁶² For recent critics who have exonerated Byron of borrowing from Milton, see the Introduction.

⁶³ Thus Byron in *TVOJ*:

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
Of this true dream, the telescope is gone
Which kept my optics free from all delusion,
And show'd me what I in my turn have shown:
(841-844).

enabled me to lose my wretched identity in the majesty & the power and the Glory – around – above & beneath me (ibid).

Apparently, Byron inscribes himself in the pastoral tradition by playing Theocritus' Daphnis, so lovestruck that he does not notice the "Nature" described by pastoral tropes. In addition, Byron declares himself "a lover of Nature" and "an admirer of Beauty", appropriating the former and distinguishing it from the latter while effectively objectivizing both. Privation and fatigue were hardly part of his Alpine sightseeings. Rather, they were remembered from his initial three months in Greece and conveniently projected onto the present through the prism of Classical tropes, through the lens of which he was sighting both landscapes. In effect, Byron's inescapable "wretched identity" is that of a Western-European literary tradition, where tropes stand for the Real. When Byron does come close to a "real" nature, he falls silent and looks back to the Greek imaginary evoked in the Classics. As if following Suetonius, who recorded how Caesar, while crossing Cisalpine Gaul to rejoin his army, passed his time composing a treatise on language (Hyde, 82), Byron took a pen and drafted the first two acts of *Manfred*, featuring a sort of Sublime which divulges from real nature. Apparently busy drafting *Manfred*, Byron described his final phase of Alpine touring through the Savoy Alps only *passim*.⁶⁴ Hobhouse's diary, however, shows a gentleman traveller's preoccupation with Classical tropes, where the ruins of Ancient edifices are complemented by rugged nature featuring pine hills, rifted rocks, glittering torrents, snow peaks and occasionally, "vast depths strewn with fallen trees and fragments of rocks" (*Recollections* II, 32-33). While Hobhouse seems less deliberate in creating a contemporary pastoral, his diary still presents a less-than-real landscape where literary tropes of a Classical landscape and Rousseau are merged with the Whig political nostalgia regarding the French Revolution, the beginning and the end of which ideals were respectively marked by Rousseau and Napoleon.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ In a letter to Augusta, Byron wrote that "Simplon as you know – is the most superb of all possible routes; - so I shall not describe it" (*BLJ* V, p. 114). In the already cited letter to Rogers Byron cryptically denotes the Simplon pass and the Pisse-Vache (see above) as "quite out of mortal computation" (*BLJ* V, p. 206).

⁶⁵ On Whig Francophilia and sympathies with the French Revolution and Napoleon, see Mitchell, pp. 77-97. Thus Hobhouse: "Passed the torrent of Dranse, Evian, thence went by the water's edge on Napoleon's noble road, of what he called the department of Simplon; approaching the hamlet of Meillerie the rocks and woods, and all the magnificence of that scenery which Rousseau found so savage in winter, but which seemed to us anything but savage, then came down close to us (...) Onwards to St Gingolph the scenery appeared more glorious, the rocks higher and more impending. St. Preux evidently took this part of the shore, whence he might see Clarens, and chose Meillerie as a well-sounding name" (*Recollections* II, p. 30).

VENICE AS THE REPLACEMENT FOR CLASSICAL ATHENS

Byron's impressions of the amphitheatres of Verona and Rome read as a contextual conclusion to his Continental Tour. In a postscript to a letter addressed to Moore from Verona (6 /7 November 1816), Byron described the Verona amphitheatre as “wonderful – beats even Greece” (*BLJ* V, 126). On 9 May 1817, just after he had completed and dispatched the final version of *Manfred's* Act III to Murray, Byron wrote him a letter stating: “I am delighted with Rome (...) it is a fine thing to see – finer than Greece” (*BLJ* V, 221). However, Byron chose not to live in Rome, but in Venice, which presented a parallel with Classical Athens in being a rapacious oligodemocratic city-state, contending with the mighty Oriental neighbour (i.e. the Ottoman Empire, which for its part supplanted the Persians) over the rulership of Eastern Mediterranean. In *Venice. An Ode*, Byron draws a parallel with Classical Greece and Venice:

Oh Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls
Are level with the waters, there shall be
A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,
A loud lament along the sweeping sea!
(1-4).⁶⁶

He further evokes “the echo of [the Venetian Republic's] tyrant's voice along / The soft waves” (23-24) and the “past and gone” Commonwealth (125) before directly comparing the recently disbanded Republic of Venice with the confederacy of Ancient Greece, epitomized by its bravest defenders, the Spartans:

- better be
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,
In their proud charnel of Thermopylae,
Than stagnate in our marsh,-
(154-157).

In *CHP* IV: xvi-xvii, Byron establishes another associative parallel between Venice and Classical Athens. According to Plutarch's *Life of Nicias*, the morale of the Athenians who survived the disaster of the Peloponesian war was kept up by rehearsing and reciting the works of Euripides. In *CHP* IV: xvi, Byron cryptically alludes to Euripides by the metaphors, “the Attic Muse” (138) and “the bard” (144), glossing the former by referring his reader to the relevant chapter in Plutarch's *Life of Nicias* in the manuscript

⁶⁶ See George Gordon, Lord Byron, “Venice. An Ode”, *CPW* IV, pp. 201-206 (p. 201).

(*CPW* II, 321). In the following stanza, Byron credits Venice for her “choral memory of the Bard divine”, Tasso (xvii: 147-148), while deploring its contemporary political situation (149-150). Thus, Venice is presented as the heir to Ancient Greek principles regarding democracy and the reverence for the poets.

In Byron’s day, Venice itself, as well as the regions of Italy subject to Venetian rule hosted many learned and politically ambitious Greeks. In the city itself, the Greek community was headed by Isabella Teotochi, Countess Albrizzi (1761-1836), a Corfiote by birth and an Athenian by origin, hailed by Byron as “the De Staël of Venice” (*BLJ* V, 148). On her *conversazioni*, Byron and Hobhouse socialized with Andreas Mustoxidi, the keeper of the manuscripts on Milan’s Ambrosian Library, which they visited during their stay in Milan (*BLJ* V, 116), and “the Chevalier” Naranzi, the Consul of Russia.⁶⁷ After Hobhouse left for London, Byron wrote him a letter (7 March 1817) stating that

Dr. Skinas lately sent a proposition through Mustoxithi (sic) to Made. Albrizzi to accompany me to Greece – which I have declined because of Pestilence there – and undefined Quarantine on one’s return (*BLJ* V, 182).

Thus, Byron’s intended Philhellenic mission, which culminated with his second sojourn and subsequent death in Greece, seems to have started as early as in the late 1816, when he arrived in Venice.

As Maria Schoina indicates, Byron’s previous experience in Greece was central to his subsequent acculturation in Italy, helping him “reconcile and celebrate the discrepancy of a rich cultural heritage of the past and the oppressive contemporary reality” (Schoina, 127). According to Schoina, “a Romantic cosmopolite such as Byron” experienced location as “an itinerary rather than a bounded site – a series of encounters and translations” (ibid, 10), the latter paradigm suggesting a reality conditioned by tropes.⁶⁸ In proof of Schoina’s argument, Byron’s epitaph to *CHP* I-II,

⁶⁷ Thus Hobhouse’s journal entry (16 November 1816): “A good deal of Greek in this circle. I presume that formerly the possession of the seven islands must have given a tinge to Venice. No politics (*Recollections* II, p. 62). By “the seven islands”, Hobhouse refers to the Ionian islands, successfully occupied by the English during his and Byron’s mission in Tepelene. A few days later (21 November 1816), Hobhouse again notes how “two Greeks called” on Byron, this time keen on discussing politics: “The Greeks said that assassinations might be expected this winter, as there were some last winter. He mentioned one, which turned out to be the only one, and Byron’s *lacquais* said that Venice was the safest city in Europe” (ibid, p. 63). “The Greeks” were the brothers Nicolas and Francis Karvellas from Zante, currently students in Padua, whom Byron received in the Villa Diodati on 14 September 1816 (Marchand II, p. 651).

⁶⁸ Schoina’s posit that Byron’s “conception of place (stability, safety) is mediated by his conception of space (mobility, insecurity)” (ibid, p. 10) counters Byron’s real reluctance to move from one place to another, yet coincides with Byron’s conception of place within the Classical, its literary and political tropes, and the Greek imaginary to which he felt himself heir.

taken from *Le Cosmopolite, ou le Citoyen de Monde* (1753) by Louise Charles Fougeret de Montbron, extols literary tropes before factual (geographic) reality:

L'univers est une espèce de livre, dont on n'a lu que la première page quand on n'a vu que son pays. J'en ai feuilleté un assez grand nombre, que j'ai trouvé également mauvaises. Cet examen ne m'a point été enfructueux. Je haïssais ma patrie. Toutes les impertinences des peuples divers, parmi lesquels j'ai vécu, m'ont reconcilié avec elle. Quand je n'aurais tiré d'autre bénéfice de mes voyages que celui-là, je n'en regretterais ni les frais, ni les fatigues (*CPW* II,3).⁶⁹

Thus the universe is equated with a book, whereby one's world amounts to a set of literary tropes. In the case of Byron, as well as of any other Western-European gentleman, those tropes were Classical, or their derivatives. The subject is determined to escape their "first page", namely their roots, conditioning and tradition. Standing for the first page of the universal book, Classical Greece spanned a series of microcosmic communities where the cultural and political *Ellenikon* amounted to rigid ostracism in daily practice, effectively denouncing some of the most eminent Ancient Greeks (e.g. Aeschylus, Socrates, Themistocles, Thucydides, *et al.*) as public enemies. In the light of Ancient Greek "case history", where an intellectually superior individual is forced to choose between exile and suicide, Byron does seem to have Grecian roots. After the bitter experience of ostracism from the ranks of British patricians, he composed a series of plays dramatizing events within a claustrophobic, elitist society marked by universal lack of freedom, thus referring to Whig society and its *quasi*-Greek roots.⁷⁰ However, if we bear in mind the compendium of a Greek imaginary contained in *Manfred*, we can extend the term and notion of "Greek" several years back in time so as to include *Manfred*, which can be seen as Byron's first "Greek" play in view of its assessment of the limits of man's freedom, and of its intertexts of Plato and Aeschylus.⁷¹ As I will

⁶⁹ Byron's choice of the above passage brings to mind Christensen's recent thesis on the "nameless guilt" of aristocracy (Christensen, p. 16), and of Byron's wish to escape the law of the father he was born into, as already discussed in Chapter One. Here, the law of the father is encrypted in the metaphor of universal book, which enforces a similarly inescapable law of tropes.

⁷⁰ Apparently justifying his political references to the contemporary Whig society in a letter to his publisher, Byron stated that he made a deliberate effort at "producing *regular* tragedies like the *Greeks* – but not in imitation – merely the outline of their conduct adapted to our own times and circumstances" (*BLJ* VIII, p. 57).

⁷¹ Notably, Byron began preparing for the composition of *Marino Faliero*, a play which he called "studiously Greek" (*BLJ* VIII, p. 186), at the time he was still writing *Manfred*. According to McGann, Byron started to check various historical sources on the ominous Venetian Doge from 25 February 1817, when he requested from Murray a transcript of John Moore's *View of Society and Manners in Italy* (1781), giving an account of Faliero's conspiracy (*CPW* IV, p. 524). Three days later, on 28 February 1817, Byron sent Murray Act I of *Manfred* (*BLJ* V, p. 177). In a letter to Murray from 2 April 1817, Byron discussed Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682), which dramatized the history of Marino Faliero. Again within three days, on 5 May 1817, Byron sent Murray the revised Act III (*BLJ* V, p. 219).

show on the following pages, Plato's Socrates and Aeschylus' Prometheus dictate the dramatic development and determine the message of *Manfred*.

As already noted in the Introduction, Byron compared *Marino Faliero* with Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, if only with regard to the impossibility of staging the both plays: "I speak of course humbly – and with the greatest sense of the distance of time and merit between the two performances – but merely to show the absurdity of the attempt" (*BLJ* VIII, p. 67). In a similar vein, Byron previously denied the stageability of *Manfred*, arguably aiming for the polite, politically influential audience of reading plays.

**CHAPTER FOUR: *MANFRED* IN CONVERSATION
WITH ANCIENT GREECE**

As shown in the earlier chapters, Byron was in the habit of recycling his earlier lyrical and visual impressions, all of which were rooted in his Greek imaginary. More often than not, Byron's Classical patrician heritage was felt to be an inescapable burden, only briefly facilitated by a transgressive love for an Oriental otherness, which seems closer to the Greek imaginary than the Classical tradition, adapted and appropriated by a succession of "barbarians" (i.e. North-Western Europeans). Ultimately, *Manfred* offers itself as the epitome of its author's sense of being burdened by a certain tradition, and by an absence of the "Real" at the core of the same tradition, the both of which are "staged" before the reader as a metaphorical problem. In addition, the reading of *Manfred* is seasoned by Byron's simultaneous conversations with Aeschylus, Plato, Taylor, and his own Byronic heroes, involving the concept and meaning of death and *eros* in the context of the soul's development. While the play's hero talks, thinks and feels like a Greek, his barbaric name epitomizes the discrepancy between his striving for the Greek spiritual source (i.e. the *Kalon*) and his material givens (i.e. that of birth, race and contemporary referentiality). His beloved and desired Astarte stands for the Greek imaginary itself, signifying its absent presence, the life in death, as well as the goddess of death and regeneration, as discussed in Chapter Two.

In presenting a hero who feels his suffering to be immortal because of a "continuance of enduring thought" (I.i: 4) and "the brotherhood of Cain" (i.e. the primal curse), Byron once again recycles the Byronic hero. Obviously, Childe Harold and the heroes of the *Oriental Tales* waste their lives in compulsive, ideologically transgressive roamings, framed as pilgrimage, piracy or political resistance. Manfred, for his part, moves much less in space, leaving his castle only to explore the nearby mountains, with which he is familiar to the extent of resembling the low-born mountain peasants on the grounds of his climbing skills and physical stamina. As proof, the Chamois Hunter commends Manfred's "air", as "proud as a free-born peasant's" (I.II: 64), and his physical fitness while narrowly escaping death in the abyss: "Come, 'tis bravely done. You should have been a hunter" (I.ii: 124-125). However, Manfred travels far in his mind, in realms hardly accessible to previous Byronic heroes. In contrast to them, he is a dedicated scholar, and a magus. Like Plato's heroes, he is overly concerned with the state his soul, and wants to discover the core of its predicament. In effect, *Manfred* seems to stage a philosopher's *theoria*, a mental pilgrimage on which the hero doubles as a *theoros* and a hierophant. Each of the play's respective acts presents a different

theoria. In a parallel with the paradigm of the Eleusinian Mysteries elaborated by Plato, the final illumination is preceded by two initiatory journeys. Within those journeys, the mythopoetic tropes read as disturbingly “mixed”, good and evil often inherent in the same entity and situation. As with the Eleusinian Mysteries, where gods and goddesses are characterized by a duality which is difficult to grasp, Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* espouses a dual, or “mixed” mythology, wherein the notion of Zeus as a vindictive and tyrannical deity coexists with the notion of the same god a kind and judicious “heavenly father”. Thus, the Chorus states that, “With laws that are new Zeus wields power unlawfully” (150); that “With inflexible purpose he vengefully suppresses / The race of Titans sprung from Ouranos” (164-165); that his ways “Are beyond reach and his heart cannot be swayed” (185); “That a harsh monarch wields power, without controls” (324); and that he shows “to the former gods / his arrogant might” (404-405). However, it also refers to “Zeus’ harmonious design” (552). Prometheus, for his part, prophesies to Io that their mutual tormentor Zeus will finally heal her “By caressing you, just touching, with calming hand” (849), just as he will eventually be reconciliated with Prometheus himself:

He will at some time smooth his harsh anger
And eagerly come to a close bond of friendship
With me who will be eagerly waiting
(190-192).

The mediating factor between the two opposing visions of Zeus is time, within which a certain progress in consciousness takes place, allowing both opponents to rethink and revoke their previous attitudes. In the same way, *Manfred*’s spiritual hierarchy of bullies gradually progresses toward honouring Manfred, the progress being clearly conditioned on the hero’s spiritual progress, which takes place in three separate stages.

The play opens *in medias res*, with the Byronic hero’s taking the first step towards a liberating change. He predates his inner restlessness by a certain fatal event, “that all-nameless hour”, after which he fell into what approximates to death in life:

- Good, or evil, life,
powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,
And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes and wishes,
Or lurking love of something on the earth

(I.i: 21-27).¹

He feels “the strong curse which is upon my soul, / The thought which is within me and around me” (I.i: 47-48), effectively using the same curse as a “tyrant spell” to invoke the seven elemental Spirits and to make them do his bidding. As shown in the previous chapter, the nature and function of those Spirits follows the Ancient Greek notion of the Titans as the forces which animate raw matter. In effect, Manfred asks the Spirits to bestow on him a “Forgetfulness”

Of that which is within me; read it there –
Ye know it, and I cannot utter it
(I.i: 137-138).

Apparently, Manfred is horrified of “that which is within me”, yet unable to verbally define his inner blockage. The spirits do his bidding in an unexpected way, providing him with a vision of a beautiful female shape which vanishes as he attempts to embrace it, as already discussed in the first two chapters. Manfred then falls unconscious, and a “distant Voice” sings the Incantation, apparently reiterating the curse evoked in his earlier conjuration of the spirits:

By the strong curse which is upon my soul,
The thought which is within me and around me,
I do compel ye to my will
(I.i: 47-49).

Subsequently, the “Voice” singing the Incantation conflates the curse and the thought:

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep,
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of thy spell
(I.i: 202-211).

I have noted the parallel between Manfred, the Giaour and Harold in that they are cursed with the demon thought, originated in themselves. However, the spiritual progress of *Manfred* explains how the hero is cursed by his own lack of insight, which has allowed the demon thought to assume a life of its own. Thus her voice:

¹ Compare with *CHP* I: 837-872.

From thy false tears I did distil
 An essence which hath strength to kill;
 From thy own heart I then did wring
 The black blood in its blackest spring;
 From thy own smile I snatch'd the snake,
 For there it coil'd as in a brake;
 From thy own lip I drew the charm
 Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
 In proving every poison known,
 I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
 By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
 By that most seeming virtuous eye,
 By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
 By the perfection of thine art
 Which pass'd for human thine own heart;
 By thy delight in others' pain,
 And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
 I call upon thee! and compel
 Thyself to be thy proper Hell!
 (I.i: 232-251).

The Incantation lines are of a much earlier provenance than the rest of the play, thus providing a viable link with Byron's sojourn on the Levant, and the contemporality with Childe Harold and the Giaour. While Harold seems involved in a rational (if imaginary) conversation with Florence / Calypso / Inez, the above lines, apparently a reference to Harold's (self-stated) Don Juanism, are sung to Manfred, who is lying unconscious. The rational, ego-centric Harold keeps the siren voices of his imaginary others (i.e. Calypso, Inez, "the demon, Thought") at bay by means of wandering from place to place, like the first exile, Cain. On the contrary, Manfred is overwhelmed by his demon thought to the extent of falling unconscious, apparently overcome by a sudden return of his deeply repressed desire. The message of Manfred's repressed thought amounts to his being his own proper hell, apparently not on the grounds of any objective guilt (as in the case of Harold), but on the grounds of his own *eros* (love and desire). As outlined in the Introduction, *eros* in Plato functions as the catalyst for enlightenment. However, Manfred (and Harold) split *eros* into the intellectual and carnal. The puzzle of Manfred's inner division with regard to *eros* has a parallel in Taylor's *Dissertation*, where the soul is seen as suffering in its fleshly state, which facilitates its return to the source only by being transcended through metaphorical contemplation. Taylor, for his part, makes sure to intellectualize the sexually charged Greek myth, such as that of the

mortal Baubo exposing her private parts to the grieving Ceres, whereupon the latter burst into laughter. For Taylor, Ceres in this instance represents intellect temporarily distracted by the senses, just as Proserpina, ensnared by Hades, represents the soul's fall into matter from its original pure state.² Furthermore, Taylor sees the function of *hierogamos* in Bacchic mysteries as therapeutic, calculated to cure the initiate of carnal appetites, whereby quoting from Iamblichus, who indicated that

exhibitions of this kind in the mysteries were designed to free us from licentious passions, by gratifying the sight, and at the same time vanquishing desire, through the awful sanctity with which those rites were accompanied (...) For he is nothing more than a quack in medicine who endeavors to remove a latent bodily disease before he has called it forth externally, and by this means diminished its fury; so he is nothing more than a pretender in philosophy who attempts to remove the passions by violence, instead of moderate compliance and gentle persuasion (ibid, 468).

Much rather than a curse from a real woman, or her shadow, Manfred here appears to be cursed by the shadow of his own buried desire, which gradually caused him to lose the ability to feel, to rejoice in life, and to access ultimate knowledge. This conclusion seems corroborated in the Second scene of Act I, where Manfred has regained consciousness, and with it a vague recollection of the nature of his curse, which he now discovers in his own inner division "between low wants and lofty wills" – rephrased, his inability to separate love from sexual desire. In the same context, he voices a Socratic contempt for non-intellectual Nature (i.e. matter), and affiliates with the gods

² See Thomas Taylor, "A Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries. Second Edition, with Alterations", *The Pamphleteer* 8.15/16 (London: A. J. Valpy, 1816), 33-66, 455-486 (p. 469). According to Taylor, Baubo "may be considered as the symbol of that passive, effeminate, and corporeal life through which the soul becomes united with this terrene body, and through which being at first ensnared, it descended, and, as it were, was born into the realms of generation, passing, by this means, from mature perfection, splendour, and reality, into infancy, darkness, and error" (ibid, p. 468). In effect, *Cain's* Lucifer echoes Taylor:

But if that high thought were
Link'd to a servile mass of matter, and,
Knowing such things, aspiring to such things,
And science still beyond them, were chain'd down
To the most gross and petty paltry wants,
All foul and fulsome, and the very best
Of thine enjoyments a sweet degradation,
A most enervating and filthy cheat
To lure thee on to the renewal of
Fresh shouls and bodies, all foredoom'd to be
As frail, and few so happy -
(*Cain* II.i: 50-60).

Like Manfred, Lucifer states that knowledge stands in opposition to love (I.i: 423-426). See George Gordon, Lord Byron, "Cain, A Mystery", *CPW* VI, pp. 227-295 (pp. 246-247, 253-254).

(i.e. mind) who animate it. Simultaneously, he engages in an apparent dialogue with Aeschylus' Prometheus in saying:³

- My mother Earth!
And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
And thou, the bright eye of the universe,
That openest over all, and unto all
Art a delight – thou shin'st not on my heart
(I.ii: 7-12).

In *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus says:

Earth mother of all
And all-seeing, circling Sun, I call on you:
Look on me, a god, how the gods make me suffer
(90-92).

Manfred then goes on:

How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself;
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will
Till our mortality predominates,
And men are – what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other
(I.ii: 37-47).

The metonym "alike unfit to sink or soar" evokes a stand-by position, a sense of being immobilized. Manfred's speech metaphorically evokes Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, where the immortal hero's body is said to be "withering" at the mercy of natural elements (23-24), despite his spiritual superiority. In *Prometheus*, Byron compares Prometheus to humans on the grounds of being "in part divine, / A troubled stream from a pure source" (47-48). This semi-divinity is reiterated in Manfred's "half dust half deity" paradigm. As if wanting to expiate for his partly material (*ergo* carnal) nature, epitomized by "low wants", Manfred wishes the eagle and its young to feed on his flesh:

Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister,

³ According to McGann's note, the entire Scene II of Act I "generally recalls Prometheus on the rock of the Caucasus in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*" (CPW IV, p. 472).

Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well mays't thou swoop so near me – I should be
Thy prey, and gorge thy eaglets;
(I.ii: 30-33).

A mythic emblem of Zeus, the eagle hovering around Manfred underlines the parallel with the bound Prometheus, to whom Hermes promises a torture inflicted by Zeus' eagle in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* (1020-1025). Upon hearing the shepherd's pipe, Manfred evokes a "bodiless enjoyment", a state suggested as beyond his grasp because of his previously admitted "low wants":

- Oh, that I were
The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment – born and dying
With the blest tone which made me!
(I.ii: 52-56).

In the above lines, Manfred alludes to Plato's *Kalon*, a sense of union with the true, the beautiful and the good at the core of his philosophy. However, Plato bases this union on a knowledge acquired within a philosophic *theoria*. Manfred's apparent inability to experience a sense of oneness without the proxy of flesh triggers his suicide attempt, prevented by the Chamois Hunter, who offers him a goblet of wine. In effect, Manfred's guilty memory of carnal desire, symbolically associated with Bacchus (the patron god of wine, inebriation and sexual abandon) comes alive:

Away, away! there is blood upon the brim!
Will it then never – never sink in the earth?
(...) I say 'tis blood – my blood! the pure warm
stream
Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other as we should not love,
And this was shed: but still it rises up,
Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven,
(II.i: 21-22...24-29).

The flow of Manfred's metaphors meanders across the opposite poles of ultimate purity and its violation, whereby honour, tradition and kinship are tarnished by an apparent incest. Paradoxically, the transgression was facilitated by love, born out of the very purity and warmth of kinship and a sense of tradition. In addition, Manfred's hallucination allegorizes his protest against separating *eros* into a "pure" and "impure" segment, not intended by Plato's Socrates yet inferred as inherent to Plato by

(Christian) Neo-Platonists. In his subsequent dialogue with the Chamois Hunter, Manfred reiterates the immortal suffering of Aeschylus' Prometheus:

(...) I have lived many years,
Many long years, but they are nothing now
To those which I must number: ages – ages –
Space and eternity – and consciousness,
With the fierce thirst of death – and still unslaked!
(II.i: 44-48).⁴

By this time, Manfred is becoming aware that he is “thy proper Hell” (I.i: 251), as revealed by the Voice in his unconscious state. Thus, he attributes his experience of himself as old to his sense of guilt. Actions are our epochs, he says, and his actions

Have made my days and nights imperishable,
Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore,
Innumerable atoms, and one desert,
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break,
But nothing rests, save carcases and wrecks,
Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness
(II.i: 53-58).

After the recollection of his “guilty” deed, Manfred assures the Chamois Hunter that he is now past suicidal thoughts:

Here's gold, and thanks for thee –
No words – it is thy due. – Follow me not –
I know my path – the mountain peril's past:
(I.ii: 92-94).

In the Second scene of Act II, Manfred approaches a cataract in a lower valley in the Alps. As argued in Peacock's *Ahrimanes*, discussed in the previous chapter, such places are frequented by the benevolent *genii* of Oromazes. However, Manfred associates the waterfall with

(...) the pale courser's tail,
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes

⁴ Compare with Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*:

See the outrageous torments
That will grate me as I struggle
Through endless stretches of time –
Such disgraceful bondage the new ruler
Of the blessed gods devised for me!
Ah! I groan for misery present
And to come. How long must I wait
For some end of these agonies?
(93-100).

But mine now drink this sight of loveliness;
I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters. – I will call her
(I.ii: 6-12).

Thus, the notion of death is conflated with ultimate beauty. Owing to the visual paradigm in the above passage, death is allegorized as a stupendous, hazardous, highly subjective insight. “Sole in this sweet solitude”, Manfred indulges in the sense of sight in a contemplative, Platonic way, complementing his earlier aural sensation, which facilitated the contemplation of “the natural music of the mountain reed”, “the viewless spirit of a lovely sound”, “a breathing harmony”, apparently following Plato’s extolling of pipe music as appropriate to celebrate the chaste Apollo (*Republic* III: 398-400). Previously, the enjoyed sound seems to have only worsened Manfred’s dejection, triggering his resolve to commit suicide. His lack of insight was metaphorized by the clouds, which in return are compared to the sea:

The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,
Heaped with the damn’d like pebbles
(I.ii: 85-89).

In *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus is at first afraid of the approaching Chorus of Oceanides, who flock to him on the wings of the sea-birds, apparently anticipating Manfred’s “white and sulphery” vision of “foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell” by the following lines:

Aah! What now is the sound that I hear
Nearby, a whirring of birds? The air
Hisses with the faint flapping of winds;
Everything that comes to me brings fear
(...)
Aah!
Children of Tethys who had many offspring
And of your father Ocean, who circles
All the earth untiringly
With its surging stream, look at me!
(124-127...136-140).

Anticipating Manfred’s “hellish” evocations, Aeschylus’ Prometheus goes on:

If only he had hurled me under the earth
Beneath Hades collector of souls to limitless
Tartaros, had savagely bound me

With inescapable chains so that neither god
Nor anyone else can delight at this
(153-157).⁵

Aeschylus creates a path for his Prometheus to slowly grow out of his benighted state, comprising a feeling of isolation, bitterness and self-pity. Encouraged by the Chorus to relate of his immense achievements in the past, whereby he accredited mortals and immortals alike (205-275), Prometheus gradually remembers his superiority, which can set him free. As Okeanos points out, “words are physicians for a sick disposition” (378). In *Manfred*, the rational dialogue between Manfred and the Witch of the Alps appears to serve the same purpose as that of Prometheus’ exchange with Okeanos and the Chorus of his daughters. Within a *sui generis* therapy session with the Witch of the Alps, he is driven back to the memory of his failure and despair by the act of talking.

In Act II, after an aborted suicide attempt and a therapeutic recollection of an apparently incestuous episode, Manfred’s rationality is restored. By flinging a handful of water in the air, Manfred conjures up a temporary, illusory vision of water and light. Symbolically, The Witch of the Alps stands for the Pythoness, as well as for a Titaness. Since the Titans were the children of Ouranos (Heaven) and Gaia (Earth), the Witch of the Alps, “Earth’s least-mortal daughter” of “unearthly stature” (II.ii: 15-16), combines and mediates the characteristics of both. In calling himself, “a Son of Earth” (27-28), Manfred apparently reminds the Witch of their relatedness. Comparing her “hues of youth” (17) with “the blush of earth embracing with her heaven” (22), Manfred suggests an apparition of blooming yet non-erotic womanhood, her face

Carnation’d like a sleeping infant’s cheek
Rock’d by the beating of her mother’s heart,
Or the rose tints, which summer’s twilight leaves
Upon a lofty glacier’s virgin snow
(18-21).

Her beauty is “an essence / Of purer elements” (16-17) and her “calm clear brow” (25) glasses a “serenity of soul” (26), thus suggesting a priestess or a prophetess rather than a nubile nymph. In line with Artemis or Athena, the beautiful Titaness appears to be armed, commanding the sunbow which Manfred begs her to “make tame” (23). She is completely non-physical, an imaginary presence aptly addressed as a “Beautiful Spirit”, a *phantasmaton* of a Titaness, or of a Pythia. According to his own words, Manfred

⁵ As if paraphrasing Prometheus’ subsequent words on the fall of the Titans (*Prometheus Bound* 197-221), with the latter suggested as wielding “strength alone and brute force” (208), Manfred personifies the fall of the mountains (*Manfred* I.ii: 92-99), discussed in the previous chapter.

invoked her for a purely aesthetic pleasure of admiring her perfect image: “To look upon thy beauty – nothing further” (38). Further applying to the intertext of Bacchic nympholepsy, Manfred suggests himself as a *theoros*, or a *mystes*:

The face of the earth hath madden'd me, and I
Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce
To the abodes of those who govern her -
(II.ii: 39-41).

However, Manfred now feels that the entities met on his *theoria* are nothing more than images, evoked as *phantasmata* in Plato. Namely, he has “sought / From them what they cannot bestow, and now / I search no further” (II.ii: 42-44). The mysterious “boon”, suggesting the “forgetfulness” and “self-oblivion” asked of the seven Spirits in Act I, evokes “the boon to die” from *Prometheus*, as mentioned in the previous chapter. When Manfred asked the seven Spirits to help him to “Forgetfulness”, they replied that he might die in the process. Manfred countered: “Will death bestow [the self-oblivion] on me?” (I.i: 148). Thus, while being unafraid of death, Manfred showed that he does not equal death with the sought “self-oblivion”, or the escape from “the continuance of enduring thought” (I.i: 4). The spirits, for their part, are ignorant of death since they are immortal. Still, Manfred keeps seeking their company in a manner proportional to his avoidance of fellow-humans, using the Witch of the Alps as his therapist-*ex-machina*. Reiterating his previous pre-rational utterances to the Chamois Hunter, he now gets at “the core of my heart’s grief” (II.ii: 99) by remembering a beloved who looked and thought like himself. As he tells the Witch,

From my youth upwards
My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
My joys, my griefs, my passions and my powers,
Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
Nor midst the creatures of clay that girded me
Was there but one who – but of her anon
(II.ii: 50-59).

Through the principle of dialectical contrast, Manfred is reminded of the single human being he used to love precisely on the grounds of his lack of love for humanity, as anticipated in *The Corsair*, where Conrad’s love for Medora seems similarly

conditioned on his misanthropy.⁶ In contrast to Conrad, Manfred is not a sociopath. He “never quell’d / An enemy, save in my just defence” (II.i: 85-86). Instead, he is given to “lone wanderings” through nature, in the laws and phenomena of which he seeks to find “conclusions most forbidden”. Following his Greek predecessors, Manfred is simultaneously a nympholept and an empiricist, assessing the divine law by means of nature, seen as essentially inanimate.⁷ The concept of death seems central to his mystical and rational strivings:

And then I dived,
In my lone wanderings, to the caves of death,
Searching its cause in its effect; and drew
From wither’d bones, and skulls, and heap’d up dust,
Conclusions most forbidden. Then I pass’d
The nights of years in sciences untaught,
Save in the old-time; and with time and toil,
And terrible ordeal, and such penance
As in itself hath power upon the air,
And spirits that do compass air and earth,
Space, and the peopled infinite, I made
Mine eyes familiar with Eternity,
Such as, before me, did the Magi, and
He who from out their fountain dwellings raised
Eros and Anteros, at Gadara,
As I do thee;
(II.ii: 79-94).

The paradigm of Eros and Anteros evokes the two separated halves of Manfred’s *eros*, respectively suppressed (desire) and withered (love). The paradigm brings about the memory of his one mortal love. While he previously said to the Chamois Hunter that he and his beloved “had one heart”, allowing for a speculation that the “beloved” was extant only within himself, he now evokes the beloved as his twin:

She was like me in lineaments – her eyes,
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;
But soften’d all, and temper’d into beauty;
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind

⁶ Compare with *The Corsair*:

Yet the same feeling that thou dost condemn,
My very love to thee is hate to them,
So closely mingling here, that disentrined,
I cease to love thee when I love mankind:
(I: 402-405).

⁷ In the subsequently deleted passage in the manuscript of Act II (Scene II), Manfred states that “Natures (sic) past that blank fatality of understanding” (*CPW* IV, p. 76).

To comprehend the universe:
(II.ii: 105-111).

At this point in his composition, Byron might have looked up the pages in Taylor's Pausanias, where the figures of Orpheus, Narcissus and the incestuous Ptolemies conflate Prometheanism, nympholepsy, incest, and the Continental Greek sites through which Byron passed after paying homage to Apollo at the site of Parnassus, as noted in Chapter Two. As observed by Lutz, love is central to "Byronic philosophy", extolled negatively by a focus on its absence, anticipated by a tragic deflection of the beloved. Significantly, Byron's early translation of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Vincitus*, cited in Chapter One, focuses on Prometheus' loss of the beloved:

How different now thy joyless fate
Since first Hesione thy bride,
When plac'd aloft in godlike state,
The blushing beauty by thy side.
Thou sat'st, while reverend Ocean smil'd,
And mirthful strains the hours beguil'd,
The Nymphs and Tritons danced around,
Nor yet thy doom was fix'd, nor Jove relentless
frown'd
(CPWI, 76).

In Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus is said to be married to his niece, Hesione, the daughter of Okeanos. However, she is evoked *passim*, and has no further importance in the play. Thus the Chorus:

It flew into my mind that this lament for you is
Totally different from that other one,
The melody I sang to celebrate
Your nuptial rite and bath
For your wedding, when you won over my sister
Hesione with gifts of wooing and
Took her as your wedded wife
(555-560).

In effect, Byron's translation seems to have revised the epic lines of Aeschylus towards a pastoral elegy, focused on the loss of a beloved. Manfred, the human Titan, begins to liberate himself from *his* chains by remembering his erstwhile *eros* for a mortal woman. As in the scene with the Chamois Hunter, Manfred conflates the notion of physical and spiritual kinship and love with spilt blood:

I loved her, and destroy'd her!
(...) Not with my hand, but heart – which broke her heart –
It gazed on mine, and withered. I have shed

Blood, but not hers – and yet her blood was shed –
I saw – and could not staunch it
(II.ii: 117-121).

Now, Manfred's twin-flame appears to have died after having gazed on his heart, namely upon gaining insight into his flawed nature. We find here another parallel with *The Corsair*, where Medora metaphorically "gazes" on her husband's heart, and gains a withering insight:

I only tremble when thou art not here;
Then not for mine, but that far dearer life,
Which flies from love and languishes for strife –
How strange that heart, to me so tender still,
Should war with nature and its better will!
(I: 393-397).

Deploing Conrad's vocation of brigandry, in which he indulges despite his affluence, Medora's heart is withering until she finally dies, subsequently haunting Conrad's imagination as an absent presence, suggesting a parallel with Manfred's self-accusations with regard to his beloved. Manfred's notion of a twin-flame has a parallel in *Alastor's* "veiled maid", obviously discussed with Shelley while in Switzerland:⁸

Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held
His inmost senses suspended in his web
Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.
Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,
Herself a poet
(153-161).⁹

Again, the attitude of Shelley's *Alastor* to the material Arabic maid who dotes on him, contrasted with his worship of the immaterial "veiled maid", had been anticipated by Conrad's attitude to Gulnare, contrasted with his memory of Medora, who died in his absence. However, Manfred's beloved appears to unite the lofty mind of *Alastor's*

⁸ According to Charles E. Robinson, Byron "modeled Astarte on Shelley's Veiled Maid" (sic) (Robinson, p. 49). However, Robinson indicates that the "veiled maid" is a prototype, an idealized and unbodied soul *within* the Poet's soul, whereas Astarte was an antitype, a real and physical double (presumably a sister) in whom Manfred saw his likeness", and who in return becomes as idealized and unbodied (and unattainable) as the "veiled maid" because of her death (ibid, p. 50). While resembling each other in a number of motives, the two poems differ in their respective attitudes to death. In contrast to the passive and apparently futile death of Shelley's Poet, Byron's Manfred in his dying hour asserts the Promethean power of the "Mind which is immortal", thus displaying a confidence lacked by Shelley's hero (ibid, p. 55).

⁹ See Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude", Woodcock, pp. 100-120 (p. 105).

“veiled maid” and the warm heart of the doting Arabic girl, the intellectual and the material sides of *eros*. According to Manfred, his beloved had “gentler powers than mine”:

Pity, and smiles, and tears – which I had not;
And tenderness – but that I had for her;
Humility – and that I never had.
Her faults were mine – her virtues were her own –
(II.ii: 113-116).

Thus, she is evoked as the epitome of the Socratic notion of knowledge, seen as the supreme virtue in conflating wisdom, kindness and humility. In a parallel with Leila (*The Giaour*), Medora (*The Corsair*) and Francesca (*The Siege of Corinth*), Manfred’s beloved vanished from the living world in a mysterious way. In *The Corsair*, the factual cause of Medora’s death is made relative: “It was enough – she died – what recked it how?” (III: 625). Even if she was obviously murdered by her jealous husband, Leila’s death is similarly enigmatic:

She died – I dare not tell thee how,
But look – ’tis written on my brow!
There read of Cain the curse and crime,
In characters unworn by time:
Still, ere thou dost condemn me – pause –
Not mine to act, though I the cause;
(*The Giaour* 1056-1061).

By this mystification, the reader remains riveted by the Byronic hero’s subjective perception of reality rather than by the bare facts of Leila’s murder. The Giaour’s *eros* for Leila, facilitated by her physical beauty and sexual availability, subsequently facilitates his spiritual development, thus reiterating Plato’s notion of the function of love and beauty as the engendered means to the *Kalon*, as has been discussed in Chapter Two. However, Manfred has “no sympathy with breathing flesh”, but with “a mind to comprehend the universe”. The union of Manfred and his twin-flame is suggested as based on like-mindedness, their *eros* being similarly directed at transgressive knowledge. As before, when Manfred evoked having “one heart” with his “beloved”, we are led to doubt the existence of a factual other, our doubts further fuelled by Manfred’s overly exclusive notion of love, apparently developed from a sameness with regard to origin of thought and tradition. Thus, his professed love for the other inevitably plunges back onto himself. The Levantine paradigm of inner hell and of a

scorpion girt by fire, used by the self-accusing Giaour (*The Giaour* 422-438), is reiterated by Manfred in a more solipsistic, and more Classical style:

My solitude is solitude no more,
But peopled with the Furies; – I have gnash'd
My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
Then cursed myself at sunset; - I have pray'd
For madness as a blessing - 'tis denied me.
I have affronted death – but in the war
Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
And fatal things passed harmless -
(II.ii: 130-137).

Following Aeschylus' Prometheus, Byron suggests that Manfred is immobilized yet Titanic, supervising the war of elements, his solitude peopled with immaterial beings and surrounded by what approximates to his earlier "ocean of Hell". The paradigm of an ocean aptly illustrates the rich volatility and self-sufficiency of Manfred's mind, its self-created thoughts only serving to keeping him stranded:

In phantasy, imagination, all
The affluence of my soul – which one day was
A Croesus in creation – I plunged deep,
But, like an ebbing wave, it dash'd me back
Into the gulf of my unfathom'd thought
(II.ii: 140-144).

Thus, the hero self-defines himself as his own proper hell, as stated in the Incantation. However, he still does not see how the fact can be used to his advantage. In stating that he has sought forgetfulness "in all, save where 'tis to be found" (II.ii: 146), Manfred again returns to the eternal suffering evoked in his earlier exchange with the Chamois Hunter: " - I dwell in my despair - /And live – and live for ever" (II.i: 149-150). However, he now envisages a way out of a vicious circle: He must speak to his beloved – at this point still nameless, hence undifferentiated from himself. In order for him to do so, the Witch of the Alps should "wake the dead, or lay me low with them" (II.ii: 152), following the Greek Pythia. In effect, Manfred appears to project his superego onto the Witch of the Alps, who immediately turns into a "demon thought", claiming independence from his master by asking him to "swear obedience to my will" as it "may" help him to his wishes" (II.ii: 156-157). Manfred immediately sees through her manipulation:

(...) - Obey! and whom? the spirits
Whose presence I command, and be the slave
Of those who served me – Never!

(II.ii: 158-160).

The simple awareness of the fact that it was he who invoked the entity, and apparently projected his superego onto her by assigning her the part of his analyst, prepares the way for the second stage of Manfred's Bacchic mystery.

The dialogue with the self-created "analyst-*ex-machina*" helped Manfred rationalize some of his pre-rational insights with regard to his timeless (*quia* immortal), loveless state by reiteration. He is now ready to face what he most fears. Obviously, it is not death:

- I can call the dead,
And ask them what it is we dread to be:
The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
And that is nothing –
(II.ii: 178-181).

Still, he goes on:

If I had never lived, that which I love
Had still been living; had I never loved,
That which I love would still be beautiful -
Happy and giving happiness. What is she?
What is she now? – a sufferer for my sins –
A thing I dare not think upon – or nothing
(II.ii: 193-198).

Apparently, Manfred's greatest fear consists in facing the dead body of his beloved, divested of its former beauty and turned into "a thing I dare not think upon". In effect, some of Manfred's previous paradigms, suggesting himself and his beloved as being of the same heart and mind, can be seen in a new light, that of internalizing an absented material body of the beloved to the extent that it became one's own absented part – a mechanism adopted in order to cope with ultimate loss. In *The Giaour*, the hero has no possibility of ever seeing the beloved body of Leila because he knows that she has no earthly grave:

She sleeps beneath the wandering wave –
Ah! had she but an earthy grave,
This breaking heart and throbbing head
Should seek and share her narrow bed
(1123-1126).

Similarly, Manfred suggests Astarte as "One without a tomb" (II.iv: 83). Being much more accomplished on the spiritual level than the Giaour, Manfred will do what his

predecessor could not, namely plunge into the murky water of his own oceanic mind and force himself to embrace his beloved's rotting remains:

Until this hour I never shrunk to gaze
On spirit, good or evil – now I tremble,
And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart,
But I can act even what I most abhor,
(II.ii: 201-204).

In the final scene of Act II, Manfred's fear of seeing Astarte's dead body will come true, since the reappearance of her soul on the Earth is conditioned by her erstwhile material form, Thus Nemesis:

Shadow! or Spirit!
Whatever thou art,
Which still doth inherit
The whole or a part
Of the form of thy birth,
Of the mould of thy clay,
Which returned to the earth,
Re-appear to the day!
Bear what thou borest,
The heart and the form,
And the aspect thou worst
Redeem from the worm.
Appear! – Appear! – Appear!
Who sent thee there requires thee here!
(II.iv: 84-97).

In effect, Manfred beholds the apparition of Astarte's dead body, whereby literally facing his worst fear:

Can this be death? There's bloom upon her
cheek;
But now I see it is no living hue,
But a strange hectic – like the unnatural red
Which Autumn plants upon the perish'd leaf.
It is the same! Oh, God! that I should dread
To look upon the same – Astarte! - No,
I cannot speak to her – but bid her speak –
Forgive me or condemn me
(II.iv: 98-105).

Before Astarte's "uncharneling", Manfred has to prove himself independent of, and superior to, the spiritual hierarchy of Earth, who will only then do his bidding and call her up from the dead. Thus, Manfred will again mirror Prometheus' independence from the existing spiritual hierarchy, set out in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, where the belief in Necessity as the overruling authority is countered against Zeus' tyranny, and

where Prometheus asserts himself as indispensable for Zeus given his superior knowledge, including his foresight of future events:

Just wait! Zeus, for all his stubborn thoughts,
Will yet be humbled, because of the kind of marriage
He is fixing to enter, which will hurl him from his tyrant's
Throne into oblivion; his father Kronos'
Curse will then be totally fulfilled,
Uttered as he fell from his ancient throne.
The way to avert such agonies none of the gods
Would be able to show him clearly –none but I
(*Prometheus Bound* 907-914).

Manfred, too, is “a Magian of great power, and fearful skill” (II.iv: 31). He is at first bullied by Arimanes' host of Spirits, urged to bow before “The terror of his Glory” (II.ii: 45). Refusing to do their bidding, Manfred asserts his belief in an even more sublime force, the “overruling Infinite” who made Arimanes for some other use than worship, going on to suggest that both himself and Arimanes should kneel before that force (II.iv: 46-49). His words cause a sudden shift of the mood in his favour, with the First Destiny declaring the following:

Prince of the Powers invisible! This man
Is of no common order, as his port
And presence here denote; his sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature, like
Our own; his knowledge and his powers and will,
As far as compatible with clay,
Which clogs the etherial existence, have been such
As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know –
That knowledge is not happiness, and science
But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance
(II.iv: 51-63).

Thus, the First Destiny reiterates Manfred's previous words concerning his own immortal suffering on the grounds of being caught between dust and deity, and on a knowledge amounting to sorrow:

Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life
(I.i: 10-12).

Moreover, she corroborates Manfred's earlier doubts concerning the intellectual superiority of immortals, apparently sharing his ignorance with regard to the nature of

oblivion and death, as attested by the seven Spirits and the Witch of the Alps. In addition, the First Destiny asserts that the immortals are not immune to suffering, “passions” being

attributes
Of earth and heaven, from which no power, nor
being,
Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt,
(II.iv: 64-66).

Despite recently having chanted in unison with her sisters of an increase in her power by increasing that of Arimanes, she now declares that Manfred is the strongest soul in the assembly, including Arimanes:

(...) He is mine,
And thine, it may be – be it so, or not,
No other Spirit in this region hath
A soul like his – or power upon his soul
(II.iv: 69-72).

In consequence of Manfred’s spiritual sovereignty, Arimanes’ absolute power over the Earth and her souls seems overruled. In effect, Nemesis and Arimanes do Manfred’s bidding, “uncharneling” Astarte and urging her to speak. In proof of the First Destiny’s words on the spiritual ignorance of immortals, Nemesis is unsure as to how to classify the deceased Astarte, effectively addressing her as “shadow, or spirit, whatever thou art”. As the keeper of the dead, Nemesis is expected to have the knowledge and control of the hereafter. Apparently, she falls short of her cosmic office. Apart from making the dead woman’s soul “wear the form” worn at the moment of her physical death, Nemesis has no control on the Phantom of Astarte, who for her part trumps the authority of Nemesis in a manner parallel to Manfred’s trumping of Arimanes. Her sublime imperviousness to all commands requesting her to speak causes Nemesis to declare that “She is not of our order, but belongs / To the other powers” (II.iv: 115-116), reiterating the First Destiny’s claim that no Spirit in the Hall of Arimanes, including herself and Arimanes, has power upon Manfred’s soul. In addition, the Phantom of Astarte confirms her twinship with Manfred by subsequently giving an answer to his urgent pleas, only legitimized by Arimanes’ order. Her apparent independence of the Earth’s spiritual hierarchy, including the official keeper of the dead, suggests that the Phantom

of Astarte is none other than the *phantasmaton* of *Kalon*, or the “overruling Infinite”.¹⁰ Despite the look of death which initially appalled Manfred, he can now infer that the Phantom of Astarte is essentially alive. In effect, the tone of his lines verge on a mood parallel to that voiced in *The Prayer of Nature*, discussed in Chapter Two:

I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:
I feel but what thou art – and what I am;
And I would hear yet once before I perish
The voice which was my music – Speak to me!
For I have call’d on thee in the still night,
Startled the slumbering birds from the hush’d boughs,
And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
Which answered me – many things answered me –
Spirits and men – but thou wert silent all.
Yet speak to me! I have outwatch’d the stars,
And gazed o’er heaven in vain in search of thee.
Speak to me! I have wandered o’er the earth
And never found thy likeness – Speak to me!
Look on the fiends around – they feel for me:
I fear them not, and feel for thee alone –
Speak to me! though it be in wrath; - but say –
I reckon not what – but let me hear thee once –
This once – once more!
(II.iv: 132-150).

In the first four lines of the above passage, Manfred voices a mental confusion and an emotional need for the reassuring sound of a remembered voice, one needed to convince him of her posthumous existence, whereby his guilt with regard to her departure from the living might be assuaged. The tone and intention of the passage have a parallel with Shelley’s *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, written at the time of their Lake tour:

Spirit of Beauty, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form, - where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
Ask why the sunlight not for ever
Weaves rainbows o’er you mountain river,
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown,
Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of his earth
Such gloom, - why man has such a scope

¹⁰ Given Astarte’s ability to overrule the assembled hierarchy, Katherine Kernberger infers that she might represent Ormuzd, the force of light (Beatty 2008, p. 69).

For love and hate, despondency and hope?

No voice from some sublime world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given –
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven
Remain the records of their vain endeavour,
Frail spells – whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
[...]
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart
(13-31...39-41).¹¹

Shelley's "frail spells", ineffective against "doubt, chance, and mutability", anticipate Manfred's frustration expressed in *his* vainly invoked "names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven" in Act I:

The spirits I have raised abandon me –
The spells which I have studied baffle me –
The remedy I reck'd of tortured me;
I lean no more on super-human aid,
It hath no power upon the past, and for
The future, till the past be gulf'd in darkness,
It is not of my search
(I.ii: 1-7).

While the immortal spirits could not teach Manfred the secret of the soul's liberation, the Phantom of Astarte does precisely that. In ignoring the orders of those who claim to be in charge of the dead, she becomes the epitome of the soul's posthumous liberation. Manfred addresses her with what approximates to a prayer of four specific requests:

Say that thou loath'st me not – that I do bear
This punishment for both - that thou wilt be
One of the blessed – and that I shall die,
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence – in a life
Which makes me shrink from immortality –
A future like the past. I cannot rest
(II.iv: 125-131).

From the last four lines, we can infer that Manfred's death wish metaphorizes a wish to end his inner restlessness, namely for a state termed "self-oblivion" in Act I. The flurry of Manfred's questions has the purpose of assuaging his guilt, as well as engaging the

¹¹ See Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty", Woodcock, pp. 129-131 (pp. 129-130).

Phantom in a conversation, thus proving her “not dead” and Manfred less than guilty. Unwittingly, Manfred once again wishes to coerce this non-physical entity by projecting his own superego onto it, thus casting it as a puppet of his own mental drama. However, the Phantom of Astarte seems above and beyond his game, simply answering: “Manfred! To-morrow ends thy earthly ills. / Farewell!” (II.iv: 152-153), suggesting yet not specifying that Manfred shall “die”, and remaining vague as to whether he is punished or forgiven.¹² After the Phantom of Astarte’s departure, Nemesis states: “She’s gone, and will not be recall’d; / Her words will be fulfill’d. Return to the earth” (II.iv: 156-157), suggesting the end of Manfred’s *theoria* as well as a parallel with Plato’s allegory of the cave, where the soul has to return to the cave after their *epopteia*.

In *epopteia*, the dialectical opposites are beheld as merged, whereby inner conflicts of an initiate are experienced as reconciled and no longer existent. In effect, the initiate experiences a profound sense of happiness. Plato’s *epopteia* has a parallel at the end of *Manfred*’s Act II, where the hero parts from the spiritual hierarchy assembled within the Hall of Arimanes in peace and mutual respect, which present a polar opposite to their behaviour on the beginning of the scene. Now, the Spirits aver: “Had he been one of us, he would have made / An awful spirit” (II.iv: 162-163). Before he leaves, Nemesis asks him if he had any further question, to which he answers, “None” (II.iv: 165), a promise of an end to his earthly ills being obviously all he wanted. In saying: “Then for a time farewell”, Nemesis suggests that Manfred might yet be short of his final *epopteia*. On Manfred’s subsequent asking, “We meet then – / Where? On the earth?” (165-166), Nemesis remains unspecific: “That will be seen hereafter” (166). The short exchange anticipates the theme of the ultimate stage of Manfred’s *epopteia* - a final verdict as to where (and to whom) his soul actually belongs.

Manfred’s initiatory experience in the Hall of Arimanes and its consequences in Act III seem anticipated by the following two stanzas of *CHP* III:

All heaven and earth are still – though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep: -
All heaven and earth are still: From the high host

¹² In *The Giaour*, Leila’s (mute) *phantasmaton* similarly appears to the hero as if to announce the end of his life on Earth. Similarly with the *phantasmaton* of Francesca, who appears to Alp before he is to be killed in the battle, as noted in Chapter Two. However, those two anticipators of the Phantom of Astarte are not shown in the act of defiance of the orders of Earth’s supreme spiritual entity.

Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
 All is centered in a life intense,
 Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
 But hath a part of being, and a sense
 Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
 In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
 A truth, which through our being then doth melt
 And purifies from self: it is a tone,
 The soul and source of music, which makes known
 Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
 Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
 Binding all things with beauty; - 'twould disarm
 The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm
 (lxxxix-xc).

In *Manfred*, the hero is the least alone during his apparent solitude when he invokes spirits and entities. Apparently a much vaster concept than that espoused by Burke, Byron's notion of the Sublime evoked in the above lines comprises two polar opposites, approximated to the two abstracted signifiers, "heaven" and "earth", their contest momentarily suspended by a stillness imposed from an outer, vaster force. In *Manfred*, this force is epitomized by the Phantom of Astarte, a fearful yet transforming sight (*hieron*) which facilitates a "feeling" indispensable to insight (*epopteia*). Originally "a thing I dare not think upon", her memory suppressed so deeply that she became internalized into Manfred's own self, (the Phantom of) Astarte effectively represents the *Kalon*. In the above cited "prayer" to Astarte, Manfred states that her voice used to be his music. In Plato, music is the only means to the *Kalon*. Moreover, Manfred previously associated Astarte's essence as "beautiful, happy and giving happiness", hence "binding all things with beauty", suggesting her as the (living) *Kalon*. Thus "the feeling infinite ... which through our being than doth melt and purifies from self" (*CHP* III: 842-845), "the soul and source of music" (*ibid*, 846), respectively conflating the Kantian Sublime and the Platonic *Kalon*. At the beginning of Act III, Manfred states:

There is a calm upon me –
 Inexplicable stillness! which till now
 Did not belong to what I knew of life.
 If I did not know philosophy
 To be of all our vanities the motliest,¹³
 The merest word that ever fool'd the ear

¹³ Compare with Socrates' words: "I found those held in the highest esteem [for wisdom, namely philosophers] were practically the most defective, whereas men who were supposed to be their inferiors were much better of in respect to understanding" (*Defence* 22 a).

From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem
 The golden secret, the sought 'Kalon,'(sic) found,
 And seated in my soul. It will not last,
 But it is well to have known it, though but once:
 It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense,
 And I within my tablets would note down
 That there is such a feeling
 (III.i: 6-18).

Manfred's insight of the *Kalon*, wherein the Real and the imaginary merge into One, is the only knowledge that brings him serenity and not sorrow. This insight consists of the simple knowledge that there is such a feeling. Hence the desired stillness in place of previous restlessness. As we have seen in Chapter One, Plato's Socrates indicates that the return into the cave painfully obliterates the beheld bliss of illumination. Hence, Manfred's inexplicable stillness is not meant to last, yet he is all the wiser, as will be shown in his subsequent rational and mystical encounters. Owing to having previously found the lost *Kalon*, Manfred will effectively dispel "the spectre Death", literally evoked as a Spirit in the play's final Act.

The beginning of Act III falls on the last hour of Manfred's life, which coincides with the sunset, probably suggested by Plato's *Phaedrus*. In asking his servant whether "all things are disposed of in the tower / As I directed" (III.i: 2-3), whereupon the latter brings him a key and a casket (4), Manfred is apparently embarking on a new Bacchic mystery, the symbols of key and casket suggesting the *hierá* of the Eleusinian Mysteries. However, he is interrupted by the arrival of the Abbot of St. Maurice, who confronts him with "rumours strange, and of unholy nature" concerning Manfred's communication with spirits:

'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things
 Which are forbidden to the search of man;
 That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
 The many evil and unheavenly spirits
 Which walk the valley of the shade of death,
 Thou comunest
 (III.i: 34-39).¹⁴

¹⁴ In a parallel with Manfred, Lara mystifies his vassals with mysterious nightly pursuits (*Lara* I: 135-155), one of which nearly costs him his life (I: 201-258). This episode seems reiterated in *Manfred*'s discarded Act III. Manfred's (and the Byronic hero's) problem with his immediate surroundings is aptly diagnosed by the words given to the travelling companion of Augustus Darvell: "Where there is Mystery - it is generally supposed that there must also be Evil - I know not how this may be - but in him there certainly was the one - though I could not ascertain the extent of the other - and felt loath - as far as regarded himself - to believe in its existence" (*CMP*, pp. 59-60). Also, the context of the above passage is comparable with the following passage from Socrates' defence: "Then, when asked just what he is doing

After the victory of Christianity, the Neo-Platonic magi (from whom Manfred performs his magic rites) were prosecuted as warlocks and sorcerers, all their activity sanctioned by the penalty of death. In an earlier parallel, Socrates was accused of failing to acknowledge the Olympian gods and of introducing new spiritual beings in their place (*Defence* 23 b), and subsequently forced to choose between death and exile. Unlike Socrates, who was followed by many pupils, Manfred is a hermit, which makes him all the more suspect. When the Abbot warns him that his life might be in danger, Manfred simply says: “Take it” (III.i: 47). In the light of his recent *theoria* in the Hall of Arimanes, Manfred is immune from the fear of death, even if he still lacks information concerning his final destination. The Abbot mistakes Manfred’s intransigence, actually based on inner serenity and the “sought ‘Kalon’ found”, for utter hopelessness. At Manfred’s self-comparison with Nero, who worshipped Ancient Greece and prosecuted early Christians, the Abbot answers, “And what of this?” (III.i: 97), completely missing the point of Manfred’s Classical irony. Both Manfred and Abbot share a belief that one needs “to reconcile thyself with thy own soul, / And thy own soul with heaven” (III.i: 99-100) in order to gain peace. However, Manfred refuses to have a mortal for his mediator. His dismissiveness of the Abbot’s redemptive zeal is a logical consequence of his previous communication with the immortals, comprising the seven elemental Spirits, the Witch of the Alps and eventually the spiritual hierarchy of the Earth. In his attempt to reject the Abbot, Manfred voices the lines which reiterate the gist of the “curse” sung in the Incantation:

Old man! there is no power in holy men,
 Nor charm in prayer – nor purifying form
 Of penitence – nor outward look – nor fast –
 Nor agony – nor, greater than all these,
 The innate tortures of that deep despair,
 Which is remorse without the fear of hell,
 But all in all sufficient to itself
 Would make a hell of heaven – can exorcise
 From out the unbounded spirit, the quick sense
 Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge
 Upon itself; there is no future pang
 Can deal that justice on the self-condemn’d
 He deals on his own soul

or teaching, they have nothing to say, because they have no idea what he does; yet, rather than seem at a loss, they resort to the stock charges against all who pursue intellectual inquiry, trotting out ‘things in the sky and beneath the earth’, ‘failing to acknowledge the gods’, and ‘turning the weaker argument into the stronger’”(*Defence* 23 d).

(III.i: 66-78).

Thus, through the act of speech, Manfred reclaims his power, owning that his proper hell is self-created. While the notion of oneself, being one's own proper hell, serves as the *leitmotif* of the play, the notion of "unbounded spirit" seems recent, and in contrast with Manfred's previously voiced feeling of his Promethean spark being "coop'd in clay" (I.i: 157), of being his own soul's sepulchre (I.ii: 27), and of being "half dust half deity, alike unfit / To sink or soar" (I.ii: 40-41). Evidently, his previous *theoria* in the Hall of Arimanes, where he won the respect and admiration of all immortals, and the *epopteia* of the Phantom of Astarte, who did not condemn him, as he had expected her to do in his previous reference to "the Byzanthian maid" Cleonice, effected a feeling of absolute spiritual liberation. In *Prometheus Bound*, the Titan's helpless and stagnant suffering arises from his temporarily benighted mental state. In effect, Okeanos tells him:

(...) You've taken leave of your senses,
And like some inferior doctor who's become ill
You're in despair and are unable to discover
By what medicine you yourself can be cured
(472-475).

In Act I of *Manfred*, the Chamois Hunter declared Manfred mad (I.ii: 23, 59), and Manfred himself was not able to "name that which is within me". By the time of the play's final act, Manfred is completely enlightened. As in the scene with the Chamois Hunter, Manfred now tells the Abbot how he feels himself "old," and no longer for his "imperishable" guilt, but for a "malady", which in return consists in his heart having anticipated his material death:

Look on me! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,
Without the violence of warlike death;
Some perishing of pleasure – some of study –
Some worn with toil – some of mere weariness -
Some of disease – and some insanity –
And some of withered, or of broken hearts;
For this last is a malady which slays
More than are numbered in the lists of Fate,
Taking all shapes, and bearing many names
(III.i: 138-148).

Thus, Manfred's loss of heart (i.e. *eros*) coincided with the disappearance of Astarte's body, for which he apparently took the blame in order to cope with the emotional blow.

Manfred's twice-repeated request that the Abbot should look on him (III.ii: 138, 149) apparently implores the older man to "see" him, to understand the message conveyed by his words. The Abbot, however, does not:

This should have been a noble creature: he
Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos – light and darkness –
And mind and dust – and passions and pure thoughts,
Mix'd, and contending without end or order,
All dormant or destructive: he will perish,
And yet he must not; I will try once more,
For such are worth redemption; and my duty
Is to dare all things for a righteous end
(III.i: 160-170).

Reformulating Manfred's own lines on mankind as "half dust half deity ... contending with low wants and lofty will" in Act I, as well as those of the Witch of the Alps evoking Manfred's "deeds of good and ill, extreme in both" (II.ii: 35), the above lines echo the previous descriptions of the Byronic Hero in the *Oriental Tales*.¹⁵ In an important contrast to Byron's previous works, *Manfred* grants the reader a full view of the hero's self-contained mind, showing him contending with destructive cosmic forces and asserting a belief in a higher good – a struggle unfit for the "dormant and

¹⁵ Compare with *The Giaour*:

Time hath not yet the features fixed,
But brighter traits with evil mixed -
And there are hues not always faded,
Which speak a mind not all degraded
(...) The close observer can espy
A noble soul, and lineage high. -
Alas! though both bestowed in vain,
(861-864 ... 868-870).

Also with *Lara*:

In him inexplicably mix'd appeared
Much to be loved and hated, sought and feared;
Opinion varying o'er his hidden lot,
In praise or railing ne'er his name forgot;
(...) 'Till he at last confounded good and ill,
And half mistook for fate the acts of will:
Too high for common selfishness, he could
At times resign is own for others' good,
But not in pity, not because he aught,
But in some strange perversity of thought,
That swayed him onward with a secret pride
To do what few or none would do beside;
(I: 289-292 ... 335-342).

destructive”, as he is deemed by the Abbot. In contrast to the reader, the Abbot has no access to the hero’s mind, and apparently no knowledge of the pagan philosophy which anticipated Christianity. As he approaches Manfred’s tower, the Abbot interrupts the conversation between Manfred’s two servants, discussing their master’s mysterious pursuits, previously witnessed only by Astarte:

Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower, -
How occupied, we knew not, but with him
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings – her, whom of all earthly things
That lived, the only thing he seem’d to love, -
As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The lady Astarte, his –
Hush! Who comes here?
(III.iii: 41-47).

When interrupted, the older servant takes the Abbot aside and gives him a certain information about Manfred’s activities in the tower, and apparently about his past. In an important contrast to Manfred, who previously stated that it was “The deadliest sin to love as we have loved” (II.iv: 124), Manuel believes that Manfred’s exclusive love of Astarte does him credit. However, he incriminates Manfred (and Astarte) on the grounds of their mysterious pursuits, which he deems “dangerous”, effectively warning the younger servant Herman not to pry into them but to “Content thyself with what thou knowest already” (III.iii: 11).

Presumably bolstered up by Manuel’s revelations, the Abbot revisits Manfred, who has, in the meantime, paid respect to the setting sun and the rising moon. In addition to echoing the fragment from *The Curse of Minerva*, as noted in Chapter Two, Manfred’s Orphic prayer to the sun is an intertextual reference to Plato’s *Phaedo*, where Socrates accompanies his act of drinking hemlock by a prayer to the gods for his happy departure while the sun is setting on the last day of his life (*Phaedo* 117 c). In contrast to Socrates, Manfred is not shown as drinking hemlock. However, the shift of the play’s action from the Hall in Manfred’s castle onto the terrace before his tower in Scene iii, as well as the conversation between the servants, Herman and Manuel, interrupted by the arrival of the Abbot, objectively gives Manfred time to take the potential poison away from the eye of the reader. By omitting to present Manfred’s death as a factual suicide, Byron shifts the focus of the reader onto the hero’s conscious dying, whereby Manfred’s indomitable will plays an instrumental part, and on the complex nature of the concept of death itself. As argued earlier, the Abbot seems past the ability to understand

the Socratic premise of one's own divine mind. In a parallel with the Chamois Hunter, the Abbot believes that Manfred's "noble spirit ... hath wandered" (III.iv: 52), yet is still redeemable on condition of the utterance of specific "words and prayers" (51).¹⁶ While he previously implored the Abbot to look on him (i.e. to see within him), Manfred now denies the possibility that the older man might be able to do so:

Thou knows't me not;
My days are numbered, and my days recorded:
Retire, or'twill be dangerous – Away!
(III.iv: 53-55).

As previously shown, Manfred is in the process of a transition leading to yet another *epopteia*. In refusing to leave, despite Manuel's suggestion of Manfred's reprehensible activity, and regardless of Manfred's explicit request of him to do so on the grounds of danger, the Abbot appears to be willing to watch not only *over*, but *with* Manfred, namely to act the part of a *theoros* on his way to *epopteia*. Hence, the Abbot seems to side with the transgressor, consciously taking part in a forbidden, apparently non-Christian ritual, of which he was previously warned by Manfred's servant (III.iii: 57-59). Thus, Manfred brings to mind his previous self-comparison with the "most lone Simoom" of fatal effect on those he comes across (III.i: 127-133), involving them in a push-and-pull dynamics by alternating requests to be looked on with the prohibitions against the same. Apparently seduced, the Abbot now wants to "look on", as well as "with" Manfred, who effectively stands in place of the *hieron* as well as of the *hierophantes*, facilitating the Abbot's subsequent increase in insight. The visual paradigm seems key to the shared *theoria* of Manfred and the Abbot, with Manfred directing his companion: "Look there! / What dost thou see? (...) Look there, I say, / And steadfastly; - now tell me what thou seest?" (III.iv: 58-60). In effect, Manfred and the Abbot share a vision of a dark, malignant entity. Thus the Abbot:

I see a dusk and awful figure rise
Like an infernal god from out the earth;
His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form
Robed as with angry clouds; he stands between
Thyself and me –
(...)
Ah! he unveils his aspect; on his brow
The thunder-scars are graven; from his eye
Glares forth the immortality of hell –
Avaunt! -

¹⁶ In Act II, the Chamois Hunter, who states that Manfred's "senses wander from thee" (II.i: 23) and that he is "mad – but yet I must not leave him" (II.i: 59).

(III.iv: 62-66 ... 76-79).

Here, the scene anticipates *TVOJ*, where Sathan is evoked as waving

His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved;
His brow was like the deep when tempest-tost;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And where he gazed a gloom pervaded space
(187-192).

Manfred states that he has nothing to do with the Spirit: "I did not send for him, - he is unbidden" (III.iv: 72). The Abbot, however, seems to know the entity:

Alas! lost mortal! what with guests like these
Hast thou to do! I tremble for thy sake;
(III.iv: 73-74).

The Spirit also seems to know and respect the Abbot:

Old man!
We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order;
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain; this man is forfeited
(III.iv: 94-97).

Since the Abbot in his turn respects the Spirit (albeit negatively) in crediting him with being none other than the anti-Christ, the relationship of two respectful opponents anticipates Byron's later lines from *TVOJ*, describing the encounter of the Archangel Michael and Sathan:

(...) we know
From Job, that Sathan hath the power to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a year or so;
And that 'the Sons of God,'(sic) like those of clay,
Must keep him company; and we might show,
From the same book, in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil (...)

The spirits were in neutral space, before
The gate of heaven: like eastern thresholds is
The place where Death's grand cause is argued o'er,
And souls despatched to that world or to this;
And therefore Michael and the other wore
A civil aspect: though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
There passed a mutual glance of great politeness
(257-264 ... 273-280).

In *Manfred*, the Spirit and the Abbot similarly agree that Manfred's soul must be "despatched" somewhere, that he is morally compromised, and that godhead is vindictive. Previously stating that he came to Manfred "to save and not to destroy" (III.i: 47), and in offering "penitence and pardon" (III.i: 58), the Abbot simply represents the opposite pole of the sin and retribution paradigm, the domain of the former pertaining to the Spirit. In the act of admitting that that he cannot guarantee Manfred's salvation, but only facilitate his contrition, the Abbot indirectly presents his god as ultimately vindictive:

My son! I did not speak of punishment,
But penitence and pardon; - with thyself
The choice of such remains – and for the last,
Our institutions and our strong belief
Have given me power to smooth path from sin
To higher hope and better thoughts; the first
I leave to heaven - 'Vengeance is mine alone!'
So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word
(III.i: 57-65).

Reiterated, by offering Manfred access to "all our church can teach thee" (III.i: 86), the Abbot offers a sort of closure wherein "all we can absolve thee, shall be pardon'd" (III.i: 87). In effect, Manfred is once again required to "crouch" and to prostrate his "condemned clay", but this time from a mortal servant of the ruling Evil god.

The Spirit, for his part, introduces himself as Manfred's "genius". As we have seen, the Latin term is synonymous with the Greek *angelos*, as well as with *daimon* / *daemon*, all three of which denote guiding spirits mediating between gods and humans. In his defence, Socrates speaks of his *daimon* preventing him from inappropriate action (*Defence* 31 d, 40 a-b). Earlier, in the first scene of Act I, the Seventh Spirit who rules Manfred's birth star could have been seen as the approximation of the Greek *daemon*, taken from Aristotle's work, *History of Animals*, where the Earth is said to be influenced by planets and fixed stars, which in return are ruled by *daemons*.¹⁷ Previously, Manfred has referred to a "demon" preventing him from dying:

I have affronted death - but in the war
Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
And fatal things pass'd harmless - the cold hand
Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,
Back by a single hair, which would not break

¹⁷ See Aristotle, *History of Animals*, transl. D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson (London: John Bell, 1907).

(II.ii: 135-139).

After the victory of Christianity, *daimones* and *daemones* became “demons”, ideologically opposed to the “angels”, the Christianized *angeloi*. In contrast to the Abbot, Manfred is not impressed by the Spirit, stating that he has “commanded / Things of an essence greater far than thine, / And striven with thy masters. Get thee hence!” (III.iv: 84-86). However, Manfred’s physical strength is rapidly diminishing, since his physical death is approaching. Thus, Manfred’s parting from the body makes him liable to being dragged away by manipulative immaterial forces, who avail themselves of his temporary existential confusion. However, he knows he must struggle against them:

I do defy ye, - though I feel my soul
Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye;
Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath
To breathe my scorn upon ye – earthly strength
To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye take
Shall be ta’en limb by limb
(III.iv: 99-104).

In the meantime, the Abbot’s apparent defence of Manfred from the Spirit and his “brethren” evokes a power struggle between two polar opposites of the same ideology. Thus, “piety” presumes to all power in dialectically opposing all who are not “pious” as “evil”:

Avaunt! ye evil ones! – Avaunt! I say, -
Ye have no power where piety hath power,
And I do charge ye in the name –
(III.iv: 92-94).

This dialectic is a far cry from Manfred’s earlier belief in the all-inclusive, “overruling Infinite” before whom the tyrant and his subject should kneel together. Obviously, Manfred is being torn between the polarities of the ideology he must ascend from in order to become absolutely free. To this effect, he does the following. Firstly, he denies recognition of the Spirit as instrumental to, or allegorical of, his physical death. Secondly, he denies the legitimacy of the spirits to represent physical death:

I do not combat against death, but thee
And thy surrounding angels; my past power
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science – penance –daring -
And length of watching - strength of mind – and skill
In knowledge of our fathers – when the earth
Saw men and spirits walking side by side,
And gave ye no supremacy: I stand

Upon my strength – I do defy – deny –
Spurn back, and scorn ye! –
(III.iv: 112-121).

As we can infer from this passage, Manfred refutes the very ideology of “Good” versus “Evil”, both of which are in unison with regard to patronizing his soul, taking him to an unspecified destination determined between themselves after his physical death. Christianity is used as a paradigm for the coercive cosmic ideology within which Manfred’s soul feels entrapped. The above passage uses the word “angels” in its pagan sense, referring to its literal translation from the Greek, as in Byron’s earlier translation of the apocryphal Epistle from the Corinthians, discussed in the previous chapter. Manfred’s Greek frame of reference is further corroborated by his evocation of “men and spirits walking side by side”, asserted in the Greek myth where mortals, Titans, nymphs and some of the Olympians used to communicate and share information, as well as to interbreed.¹⁸ Thus, Manfred denies the superiority of the immaterial souls to those of the mortals, echoing Plato’s words on the difference between souls on the grounds of their dedication to their *theoria*, and the message of his own words referring to “the overruling Infinite” in the previous Act. In effect, the “spectre Death” is denied the power to harm, and sounds almost ludicrous in his vain repetition of the crime and retribution paradigm: “But thy many crimes / Have made thee –” (III.iv: 121-122), to which Manfred counters:

What are they to such as thee?
Must crimes be punish’d but by other crimes,
And greater criminals? – Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;
Thou never shall possess me, *that* I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine:
The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts –
Is its own origin of ill and end –
And its own place and time – its innate sense,
When stripp’d of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without,
But is absorb’d in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey –
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter. – Back, ye baffled fiends!

¹⁸ The interrelations of souls and spirits were previously evoked in Manfred’s lines to the sun (III.ii: 5-8).

The hand of death is on me – but not yours!
(122-141).

Manfred's final retort to the Spirit heralds the last stage of his *theoria*, suggesting that the notion of one's proper heaven or hell has brought home the conclusion that one's mind is one's own god. The conclusion had been anticipated by Manfred's previous encounter with Arimanes and his Spirits, as well as by his subsequent self-diagnosis of his "malady", that of "a dead, or withered" *eros*, whereupon the bodily existence is felt as a painful burden. However, the Phantom of Astarte promised his imminent deliverance from "earthly ills". In a parallel with Manfred and the Phantom of Astarte, Socrates asserts physical life as a prison (*Phaedo* 62 b) and a malady, since his last words promising the sacrifice of a cock to the god Asclepius suggests that he is healed by death (*Phaedo* 118 a). By wrenching the power to destroy his life away from the Spirit, Manfred finally makes the entity disappear. In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, St Paul makes a distinction between "children of the rebellion" and "sons of the beloved church", declaring that only the latter shall be granted eternal life (*CMP*, 73). If Manfred's view is taken to be Socratic in assuming that life and / or immortality amount to overall lack of freedom, his words on being his own "destroyer" are superbly ironic, since he is actually his own saviour in escaping from bondage. Since the mind creates the concepts of heaven and hell, it can also make them disappear. Manfred's concept is evidently non-Christian, thus not receptive to an anti-Christian Spirit, which most likely belongs to the Abbot's concept of heaven and hell. Since the two men share a *theoria*, the immaterial entities of a Christian paradigm apparently come from the Abbot's universe, which is younger and more impaired than that of Manfred. While he did not seem to be horrified by what approximated to the Antichrist, the Abbot does seem alarmed at Manfred's refutation of the Christian paradigm, wherein one's soul is pledged to heaven or to hell. In effect, he beseeches Manfred quickly to pledge his loyalty to "heaven" so he could still slip in.¹⁹ Instead, Manfred bids him farewell, and shakes his hand, honouring his fellow-man instead of his ideology. In the light of Manfred's previous *theoria* in Act II, and the anticipated *epopte*, the Abbot's fussy comments add a surprisingly comical element to the solemn scene of Manfred's last seconds on the Earth:

Cold- cold – even to the heart –

¹⁹ In *TVOJ*, the bidding war between Heaven and Hell for the soul of the late King George III is presented within the same paradigm, reiterated more extensively and satirically.

But yet one prayer – alas! how fares it with thee? -
(III.iv: 149-150).

Manfred's answer to the above lines, "Old man,'tis not so difficult to die" (151), suggest that that he is amused at the Abbot's fussiness, apparently true to Byron's juvenile vision of *ridens moriar*, indicated in the previous chapter. Like Socrates, whose last words present a comforting joke to his disciples, Manfred's last words attest to a similar intention to administer to the Abbot's spiritual needs, offering him comfort before death, the great unknown. Shortly before those words, Manfred had stated that "the earth / Heaves as if it were beneath me" (147-148), suggesting an ascension rather than a reprobation, the latter typically allegorized by a fall, and/or by being buried underground (*vide* Trophonius or Prometheus). In comparison with his previous experience of life as being his own soul's sepulchre, the evoked sensation of soaring up brings to mind Manfred's youthful desire "to rise / I knew not whither" (III.i: 107-108), reiterated in his wish for an earthless flight of an eagle:

Ay,
Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister,
Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
(...) thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee;
(I.ii: 29-31... 33-34).

After having suffered from a lack of fulfilment with regard to worldly ambition and personal life, Manfred is finally depicted as dying with a smile of relief, instructing the Abbot, the lesser *theoros*, that the experience of dying can be positive. The Abbot, for his part, seems to paraphrase the above lines in saying:

He's gone – his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight –
Whither? I dread to think – but he is gone
(III.iv: 152-153).

According to M. G. Cooke, "the serene and simple finality" of Manfred's final words is "to some extent diminished" by the Abbot's concluding words, suggesting ambiguity and uncertainty with regard to Manfred's "earthless flight" (Cooke 1969, 73). However, embracing freedom, the goal of Manfred's intrepid fight for which he eventually paid the price of his physical life, is conditioned precisely on embracing ambiguity and uncertainty. As seen in the above lines, Manfred's paradigm of absolute freedom is equal to a flight towards the unknown, a higher realm, where the *angeloi* of an extant cosmic hierarchy fear to soar. In addition, the Abbot's words seem to build on

the context of Nemesis' words, spoken at the departure of Astarte's soul at the end of Act II. As with the case of Manfred, the reader was not informed whither the Phantom of Astarte went after her departure – only that she “will not be recalled”, which suggests a sort of liberation from being bound to any further spells and invocations.

As already suggested, Byron's personal attitude to death was pivotal to the composition of *Manfred*. In addition, it appears to have conditioned the play's delayed conclusion. As shown in the earlier chapters, Byron's notion of death was essentially Socratic. In the Cambridge letter to Dallas (21 January 1808), Byron states that he believes death to be “an eternal Sleep, at least of the Body” (*BLJ* I, 148), coinciding with Socrates' preferred speculation on the nature of death (*Defence* 40 e). In *CHP* I-II, Byron digests the creed of Socrates' defence:

Well didst thou speak, Athena's wisest son!
 'All that we know is, nothing can be known.'
 Why should we shrink from what we cannot shun?
 Each has his pang, but feeble sufferers groan
 With brain-born dreams of evil all their own.²⁰
 Pursue what Chance or Fate proclaimeth best;
 Peace waits us on the shores of Acheron:
 There no forc'd banquet claims the sated guest,
 But Silence spreads the couch of ever welcome rest.²¹

Yet if, as holiest men have deem'd, there be
 A land of souls beyond the sable shore,
 To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
 And sophists, madly vain of dubious lore;
 How sweet it were in concert to adore
 With those who made our mortal labours light!
 To hear each voice we fear'd to hear no more!
 Behold each mighty shade reveal'd to sight,
 The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who taught the right!
 (*CHP* II: vii – viii).²²

²⁰ Harold's “brain-born dreams of evil” anticipate Manfred's “innate tortures of that deep despair, / Which is remorse without the fear of hell, / But all in all sufficient to itself / Would make a hell of heaven” (III.i: 70-73).

²¹ Thus Socrates: “After all, gentlemen, the fear of death amounts simply to thinking one is wise when one is not: it is thinking one knows something one does not know. No one knows, you see, whether death may not in fact prove the greatest of all blessings for mankind; but people fear it as if they knew it for certain to be the greatest of evils. And yet to think that one knows what one does not know must surely be the kind of folly which is reprehensible (...) Hence I shall never flee from something which may indeed be a good for all I know, rather than from things I know to be evils” (*Defence* 29 a-b).

²² Compare with Socrates: “On the other hand, if death is like taking a trip from here to another place, and if it is true, as we are told, that all of the dead do indeed exist in that other place, why then, gentlemen of the jury, what could be a greater blessing than that? If upon arriving in Hades, and being rid of these people who profess to be ‘jurors’, one is going to find those who are truly judges, and who are also said to sit in judgment there – Minos, Rhadamanthys, Aeacus, Triptolemus, and all other demigods who were righteous in their own lives – would that be a disappointing journey? Or again, what would any

“Athena’s wisest son”, the “Bactrian” and the “Samian” sage are, respectively, Socrates, Zoroaster and Pythagoras. However, Byron was essentially afraid of immortality. Shortly before he awoke famous, Byron wrote to Hodgson (3 September 1811):

I will have nothing to do with your immortality; we are miserable enough in this life, without the absurdity of speculating upon another. If men are to live, why die at all? And if they die, why disturb the sweet and sound sleep that “knows no waking”? “Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque Mors nihil ... quaerisquo iaceas post obitum loco? Quo *non* Nata jacent” (*BLJ* II, 89).²³

Significantly, Byron draws his musings on death from Greek soil, informing his friend that the above stated insight was gained on “a bed of sickness in a far distant country, when I had neither friend, nor comforter, nor hope, to sustain me” (*ibid*). In effect, he “looked to death as a relief from pain, without a wish for an after-life, but a confidence that the God who punishes in this existence had left that last asylum for the weary” (*ibid*). Thoroughly revising the factual Greek blueprint of those lines, namely the time of his malaric fever in Patras (c 23 August – 2 October 1810), the above letter anticipates the speculation inherent in *Manfred*.²⁴ While drafting *Manfred*, Byron momentarily slipped out of his hero’s persona, voicing his own personal fear of immortality in the rough draft of Act II, after the line 177:

What is my dread – the dread to live / breathe again
And live / breathe [MS. *torn*]
Of all things to be coveted and therefore
The spirits which predominate oer (sic) all
Cannot annihilate themselves nor us
If that they could they would not live and we
Should live on – forever < ? >
Natures (sic) past that blank fatality
Of <being> understanding – if there < ? > were
A perfect being – could he gaze on pain?

of you not give to share the company of Orpheus and Musaeus, of Hesiod and Homer? I say ‘you’, since I personally would be willing to die many times over, if those tales are true. Why? Because my own sojourn there would be wonderful, if I could meet Palamedes, or Ajax, son of Telamon, or anyone else of old who met their death through an unjust verdict. Whenever I met them, I could compare my own experiences with theirs – which would be not unamusing, I fancy – and best of all, I could spend time questioning and probing people there, just as I do here, to find out who is truly wise, and who thinks he is without being so (*Defence* 40 e – 41 b).

²³ Seneca, *Troades*, 397 ff. “There is nothing after death, and eath itself is nothing. You seek the place when one lies after death? Where those unborn lie”. Cf *BLJ* II, p. 89 n1. Also Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Troades*, ed. / transl. Elaine Fantham (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 150-151.

²⁴ Instead of lying and musing alone on his “deathbed”, Byron was then surrounded by an entourage of his Greek physicians (to speak nothing of his servants and his devoted friend Nicolo Lusieri), who intermittently leeches and glystered him, as he reported to Hobhouse (*BLJ* II, pp. 14-16) and Hodgson (*BLJ* II, p. 18).

Why I who suffer < ? > to him about me
 Within me and around me worship serve
 To which the < ? > the visible world
 Hath < ? > things that could contain (...)
 (CPW IV, 76 n).²⁵

As we have seen, Byron almost immediately revised those lines in order to accredit Manfred with an entirely different “dread” (i.e. that of beholding Astarte’s corpse), much more coherent with the course of the play. The above lines are reiterated within those of the First Destiny, who basically asserts that the immortals are no better (if not worse) than Manfred, since they are not immune to “passions” and since their superior intelligence amounts to an exchange of “ignorance for that / Which is another kind of ignorance”. In effect, the First Destiny’s words seem to bolster Manfred’s (and the reader’s) speculation on death as a boon.

At the time of the completion of *Manfred*, Byron was informed of Lady Byron’s legal action to ensure the custody of their infant daughter, Ada. Apparently, it was only then that Byron realized the extent of his infamy in Britain. In a letter to Hanson from 11 November 1816, he still speculated on a possible return to England in the spring of 1817 (*BLJ* V, 129). As he now realized, his return to England and a subsequent reintegration into British society would be hardly possible. In effect, Byron seems to have experienced a form of personal disintegration, his self-image of a British patrician forever changed by the public loss of face and ancestral property. Within the interval between the composition of the first and the second Act III of *Manfred*, Byron’s correspondence attests to an altered state of mind. Possibly running from personal history into Greek myth in order to find salvation, or sanity, as suggested by Taylor’s *Dissertation*, Byron appears to be casting himself as Aeschylus’ hero without a trace of his characteristic self-conscious irony.²⁶ He sought to mitigate his disintegrating sense of self by plunging into the apocryphal manuscripts of the Mekhitarist monastery, where he studied, translated and wrote *Manfred*, and subsequently into the revelry of Venetian Carnival season, until he finally collapsed with a fever.

Manfred’s Act I was dispatched to Murray on 28 February 1817 (*BLJ* V, 177). There is no letter from Byron giving a date when he sent Murray the second act.

²⁵ More atheistic than sceptical, the above speculation anticipates *Cain* (1821), the work which caused so much public outcry as to cause Murray to finally distance himself from Byron.

²⁶ Thus Byron’s reluctance to “tempt the Fates” (*BLJ* V, p. 196), his persistence in calling Lady Byron “his moral Clytemnestra” (ibid, pp. 144, 186, 191, 198), his prophecy that his daughter Ada “will become my Orestes & Electra too, both in one” (ibid, p. 198) and his invoking of “the Goddess Nemesis” (ibid, pp. 181, 220).

However, the first version of Act III was sent off on 9 March 1817, accompanied by a letter stating that the two previous acts have already been sent “within the last three weeks” (*BLJ* V, 183). During the said interval, Byron was ill with a fever, by which he was reminded of his previous, nearly fatal, malaric fever in Patras (*BLJ* V, 197).²⁷ In a letter to Moore (25 March 1817), Byron evokes his illness as a form of Bacchic mystery:

I have been very ill with a slow fever, which at last took to flying, and became as quick as need be. But, at length, after a week of half-delirium, burning skin, thirst, hot headach (sic), horrible pulsation, and no sleep, by the blessings of barley water, and refusing to see any physician, I recovered (*BLJ* V, 187).

Here, Byron seems to insist on his own inner resources, a “firm will” and “deep sense” evoked earlier in *Prometheus*. His chosen metaphor of barley water (or a possibly factual reliance on barley, a well-known natural remedy), seems taken from a purification ritual pertaining to the Greater Eleusinian Mysteries (Kerenyi, 40). Byron’s lonely recovery apparently helped him to a temporary sense of invincibility, well-known to all who have ever been able to recover from a possibly fatal disease given their own inner forces. This inner self-sufficiency might have informed his subsequent revision of *Manfred*’s Act III towards its famous conclusions of the immortality of mind and the effective irrelevance of death. In effect, he replaced the Demon Ashtaroath with a far more intimidating Spirit and his “brethren”, recast the Abbot as a serious and moral (if spiritually deficient) character, and rid Manfred of the suggested pact with the infernal agent, as well as of “pranks fantastical”, inconsistent with his morally superior stance with regard to forces of (Christian and pagan) heaven and hell. Most importantly, Byron took his reading audience into Manfred’s tower in order to witness his conscious, Socratic death.

²⁷ Byron effectively attributed the blunders of the first Act III to his illness (9 April 1817): “The 2 first acts are the best – the third so so – but I was blown with fits and second heats” (*BLJ* V, p. 209). A week later (14 April 1817), Byron states that the “certainly d-d bad” last act “has the dregs of my fever – during which it was written” (*BLJ* V, p. 211). Byron sent Murray the revised Act III from Rome, on 5 May 1817 (*BLJ* V, p. 219).

CONCLUSION

As I have shown in the previous chapters, Byron's Greek imaginary was a compound formed in the process of his intellectual formation in England and consolidated during the initial three months of his Levantine Tour, when he simultaneously began the composition of *CHP* I-II and a much more complicated and fragmentary process of drafting a powerful mental drama which would finally come into being as *Manfred*.

Byron's susceptibility to the Greek imaginary was encouraged by the general Philhellenism of his era, facilitated by the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon, by a burgeoning Orientalism in North-Western Europe (especially in Britain), and by Winckelmann's aesthetic revolution, after which Ancient Greek relics and ruins were seen as the foundation of the Classical (Western-European) aesthetic canon. In addition to the trend of antiquarianism, instigated by Winckelmann, the era of Philhellenism introduced the aesthetics of the picturesque and the Sublime, both of which were pivotal to the contemporary experience and description of landscape. As I have shown in Chapter One, the Greek imaginary was constantly evoked throughout Byron's early formative years. First of all, the Turkish and Roman histories and travelogues devoured by the young Byron espoused the legacy of what used to be the realm of Hellenistic Greece, which once spanned the region from the Balkan peninsula across North Africa and reaching to the river Ganges in the East. As we have seen, some of the Roman historians presented Alexander of Macedon as a formidable magus, thus introducing a quest for forbidden knowledge as pivotal to the hero or the Greek imaginary, whose thirst for knowledge and immortality were the legacy of Socrates and Prometheus.

In the light of Byron's early reading of histories, which provided him with his first information on the life and habits of the Classical world, the process by which he started to consider himself as an heir to Ancient Greece probably started in the first of his three schools, in Aberdeen. In Harrow, the all-male camaraderie and the declamation of Classical texts allowed for an associative link with Ancient Sparta, and with the pastoral camaraderie espoused in Theocritus' *Idylls*. However, Ancient Athens and its oligodemocratic tradition provided the budding young Whigs of Harrow with a more prominent model of identification, which was now the matter of *noblesse oblige*, of a sense of cultural legacy and spiritual origin. Moreover, the process of memorizing and declaiming Plato's dialogues and Ancient Greek tragedies in Latin and in Greek, complemented by the translation and transposition of Classical lyric poetry into English, resulted in a sense of inherent "Greekness" amongst these young patricians, as

attested by Shelley's famous quip from the Preface to *Hellas*. Lastly, the libertine tradition espoused by eighteenth-century Whig MPs, many of whom had been eminent antiquarians and expeditioners to the Levant, facilitated Byron's appropriation of "the Greek imaginary" as his patrician heritage, as shown in his correspondence and lyrical compositions from the time before his first Continental Tour.

During the initial three months of his Levantine Tour, while travelling across Continental Greece in the company of John Cam Hobhouse with Pausanias as their main guide, Byron "customized" the Greek imaginary, inherent to his epoch and promoted by his patrician education, by framing it within his personal impressions of contemporary Greek landscape. Thus, he created his own inner landscape, *his* Greek imaginary, subsequently espoused in *CHP* I-II, in *Oriental Tales*, and in *Manfred*. True to his Classical upbringing and to the tradition of landscape description cultivated by his predecessors, Byron experienced nature as a series of tropes and figures, mainly from the pastoral and epic poetry, and to some extent from Longinus and Pausanias. Those atemporal tropes helped him to organize his contemporary visual experience, and to transpose it into the language of poetry. According to Pausanias, the contemporary panoramas of woods, hills and mountains were once the sites of the myths describing the creation and the fall of man, and of the Bacchic mysteries, associated with the figures of Prometheus and Orpheus. Thus, Byron was literally treading the ground where, as he would later say in *Manfred*, "the earth / Saw men and spirits walking side by side / And gave [the latter] no supremacy" (III.iv: 117-119). Paradoxically, the selfsame sites on which humans rubbed shoulders with gods and which inspired the notion of "the Promethean spark" and the "immortal mind", inherent in Classical Greek writers as well as in *Manfred*, were the sites of historical battlefields, apparently rife with bloodshed since times immemorial, and currently tyrannized by the Arnaout and Turkish vassals of Ali Pasha.¹ Bemoaning the vanished material evidence of Ancient Greece, yet averring that "some gentle spirit still haunts the spot" which Apollo appeared to have left to the mercy of contemporary Arnaout robbers, Byron showed that he was keenly aware of the absent core values of the Greek imaginary, and of its immanent, "spiritual" existence, apparently based on the very absence of material

¹ As I have noted in Chapter Two, the scene in the Hall of Arimanes, where the cosmic tyrant and his vassals are shown as gracious and respectful to Manfred, might have been inspired by Byron's real-life experience of a *tête-à-tête* with Ali Pasha, whom he subsequently described as a notorious tyrant yet a personable man.

evidence.² The dichotomy between loyalty to the canonical “absent presence” of the Greek imaginary and a love for Oriental other(ness), experienced by Byron during his time in Greece (especially with regard to his personal admiration for the Ottoman Turks and Ali Pasha), was symbolically evoked by the motif of a tragic love between the Byronic Hero and a female native of Ottoman Greece. In Byron’s poetic fictions, the love felt by the Byronic Hero becomes purely spiritual owing to the lost material body of the beloved Oriental female, which still haunts her lover as *the* vision of (vanished) beauty, effecting a spiritual extasy similar to that described in Plato with regard to the experience of the *Kalon*, as evoked by visual (immaterial) *phantasmata*.

Evidently, Byron saw his second Continental Tour as an extension of his earlier plans to emigrate from England and to finally settle down in Asia Minor after a series of expeditions and travels. As shown in Chapter One, those plans were delayed by his lack of funds, and by his short marriage. However, the only fixed travel plan from Byron’s correspondence reveals Venice as the chosen destination for his second Continental Tour. As the early Modern city-state which, in its organization and politics, adapted and appropriated Ancient Athens, Venice was the closest thing to the Greek imaginary Byron could have experienced in his day. In effect, Byron seems to have intended to upgrade his inner Greek imaginary with new impressions, accessing the canonical Greek imaginary from a different route, one leading across the Ancient Roman provinces of Gaul and Helvetia. Byron’s Classical associations were evident in *CHP* III, as well as in his correspondence, requesting an edition of Taylor’s Pausanias which he used to have by his side on his Levantine Tour, and comparing the landscape of Germany to that of Continental Greece. This projection of Byron’s inner Greek landscape onto the more recent woods, hills and mountains of Continental Europe continued on his subsequent Swiss tours, as attested in Shelley’s epistolary journal. Even more than in Greece, nature was now “imaginary Greek”, engaged with the pastoral and elegiac moods of Virgil, Ovid and Theocritus, liked only inasmuch as it was picturesque and looming large in the distance, and experienced as cruel, horrifying and anti-intellectual while on actual excursions. Byron’s discursive interaction with “Nature” was now shared with Shelley, who was impressed with Wordsworth’s

² In the wild, primitive and lawless conditions that surrounded him, Byron was reminded of the primitivistic worship of the sun and the moon, espoused by Socrates as the only legitimate religion. Obviously following Socrates, Manfred, who defies the authority of the spiritual hierarchy of the Earth, pays respect to the “glorious orb” and to the “rolling moon”, the two celestial luminaries credited for bestowing harmony and beauty on the surface of the Earth, as shown in Chapter Two.

adaptation of pastoral tropes and with Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, the latter work showing nature as conditioned by a divine *spiritus movens*, namely the Oceanides, the Titans, and the recently victorious race of Olympian gods. In a parallel with Shelley, who was currently studying Ancient Greek tragedy, Byron was studying Platonic discourse on the philosopher's journey, revised in Taylor's Neo-Platonist treatise, *A Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, which discussed the futility of suicide and the aim and purpose of physical and mental suffering. In effect, Byron used Taylor's Socrates, Aeschylus' Prometheus and the concept of the philosopher's journey as the key concepts in his subsequent poetry. At this time, he began drafting *Manfred*, typically recycling his earlier fragments, as well as the fragments of the Greek imaginary, used by other poets within their descriptions of "Nature", as discussed in the Introduction.³

During the process of producing his most metaphysical poetry to date, Byron inveigled his entourage into a series of sceptical discussions, epitomized by the Diodati "contest", or rather, "context", within which the Gothic genre was used as a facetious springboard for the solemn and uncompromising reassessment of the nature and possibilities of an afterlife. In return, Shelley (and, *in absentia*, Peacock) provided Byron with a new model for the assessment of myth, previously applied in Shelley's *Queen Mab* and in Peacock's *Ahrimanes*.⁴ Inspired by Shelley and Peacock, Byron embarked on the reassessment of the Promethean myth as soon as he settled in Venice and discovered the community of Mechitarist monks, based in the monastery of St Lazarus. As he found in the histories written by the Mekhitarists, Prometheus was reckoned to be the ur-father of the Armenians. In effect, Byron enriched his Promethean intertext, already melded to his studies of the (Neo-)Platonic philosopher's journey, by a juxtaposition of the Promethean rebel against cosmic / global oppression and the message of St Paul the Apostle's (apocryphal) words regarding death and resurrection,

³ As stated in previous chapters, those instances were the sun salutation (used in *The Curse of Minerva* and *The Corsair*), the Oriental Greek as the synecdoche for the hero's *eros* and the catalyst for his experience of *to Kalon* (used in *The Giaour* and *The Siege of Corinth*), and the notion of spiritual homelessness and mental restlessness inherent in the Greek myth of Oedipus (reiterated as "the mark of Cain" in *CHP I* and *The Giaour*). Within my discussion of the dissemination of the pastoral and the sublime, I have thus far mentioned Ovid, Virgil, Theocritus, Wordsworth and Shelley in the context of the former, and Milton and Homer in the context of the latter (see the Introduction and Chapters Two and Three).

⁴ While the intertext of Peacock's *Ahrimanes* is evident in *Manfred*, Shelley's *Queen Mab* can be seen as the intertext of *Ahrimanes* rather than of *Manfred*. Instead, the character of Ahasuerus from Shelley's *Queen Mab* seems to recycle the spiritual restlessness of the Byronic hero from the previously published *CHP I-II* and *The Giaour*. However, it is possible to put all three works in a contextual proximity on the grounds of their treatment of the unjust cosmic order.

(re)presented with a twist indebted to the Greek rhetorical tradition. Thus, thanks to Taylor, Shelley, Peacock and the Greek apocrypha, Byron's contemporary myth of a philosophic journey towards personal and human liberation was finally created. In Act III, Manfred admits to the Abbot that he once had "earthly visions" and "noble aspirations in my youth, / To make my own the mind of other men, / The enlightener of nations" (III.i: 104-107). In a way, *Manfred* aims to effect the original ambitions of its eponymous hero, and to be the enlightener of its reader. However, Byron's didacticism is subtle and subversive, possibly Promethean in its ambition yet maieutic (*ergo* Socratic) in its approach.

As argued in the previous chapter, the effect and moral of *Manfred* are based on the hero's belief that the human mind is absolutely omnipotent, to the point of being able to (un-)create life and death. As proof, we have Byron's own words, an urgent protest against the omission of Manfred's final sentence from the first edition of the play in a letter to Murray from Venice (12 August 1816), where he states that the hero's last words are a synecdoche for "the whole effect & moral" of *Manfred* (BLJ V, 257). I have concluded my Introduction by a statement that a belief that it is "not so difficult to die" *because* one's will (or "mind") is immortal and can determine one's posthumous whereabouts, presents a valid political statement, especially in the context of the fear-based, censure-laden Britain of the early nineteenth century. In view of the above, Byron's decision to call his play and its hero "mad" (e.g. BLJ V, 188, 194) simultaneously reveals his awareness of *Manfred*'s revolutionary message, and provides it with the fool's liberty of free speech.⁵ As I have explained in the Introduction, Manfred refuses the day-based social order and his expected social role of "warrior and reveller", who is "gay and free". Instead, he embraces the nocturnal, the invisible, the anti-social, following the example of his female relative rather than that of his father, Count Sigismund. In addition, he intellectually seduces the Abbot, who respectively follows him on his last *theoria* (albeit one of a lesser grade than that of Manfred himself), and who is taught an important lesson regarding conscious dying. In self-closeting his play (e.g. BLJ V, 170, 185, 188, 194-195, 209, 239), and in professing an affiliation with Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and *Seven against Thebes* (BLJ V, 268),

⁵ Thus, Byron's closeting of *Manfred* (and subsequently the rest of his plays) should be seen in the light of his political awareness and ambition rather than of his dramatic self-consciousness. For the opposite argument, attesting to Byron's "stage fright" see the argument of David Erdman, already cited in the Introduction (Gleckner and Beatty, pp. 5-32). On Byron's (alleged) political evasiveness, see Peter Graham, "Byron's *Manfred*, Negativity and Freedom", Beatty 2008, pp. 50-59 (p. 56), Cooke 1969 (p. 72) and Barton (p.109).

Byron appears to take a cue from *Manfred*. Namely, he denies the law of the legitimate stage play of his epoch, which would class *Manfred* as a Gothic melodrama, as we have seen in the Introduction. However, Byron explains his defiant divergence from the legitimate stage by asserting his “mad” drama as being superior to the legitimate stage material of his day (*BLJ* V, 170, 185).⁶ Thus a nod to the polite reader, who shares the poet’s views on the vulgar contemporary stage, as well as his gentlemanly education and Classical frame of reference, enabling him to understand the play’s field of referentiality and its deep subversion of canonical Christianity.⁷ As shown by the reviews penned by two early reviewers of *Manfred*, Byron hit the target, and his motifs and intentions were aptly recognized by the polite reader. According to Francis Jeffrey, Byron’s *Manfred* was a happy upgrade of Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*:

The chief differences [between Aeschylus and Byron] are, that the subject of the Greek poet was sanctified and exalted by the established belief of his country, and that his terrors are nowhere tempered with the sweetness which breathes from so many passages of his English rival (*RR* B II, 888).

The suggested “sweetness” is suggestive of the hero’s quest for his lost *eros*, and of his subsequent reward through the experience of *Kalon*. Rephrased, Byron “wins” against Aeschylus in successfully “tempering the terrors” of “established beliefs” by ventriloquizing Plato’s Socrates, and his philosophic *theoria* represented by Taylor, as I have shown in my reading of the play in Chapter Four. However, Byron’s Socratic intertext has an alternative, less-than-sweet, taste of ideological subversion, based on

⁶ Similarly, *Manfred* shies away from the political arena since he considers himself a lion amongst wolves:

I could not tame my nature down; for he
Must serve who fain would sway – and soothe – and
sue –
And watch all time – and pry into all place –
And be a living lie – who would become
A mighty thing amongst the mean, and such
The mass are; I disdained to mingle with
A herd, though to be a leader – and of wolves.
The lion is alone, and so am I
(III.ii: 116-123).

⁷ As argued in the Introduction, reading plays were then an important means of political action, since they aimed at a polite (*quia* rich, politically active) audience rather than the “mob” (McCalman, p. 230). Both *Seven against Thebes* and *Prometheus Bound*, Byron’s admitted intertext, were assessed primarily as reading plays since antiquity. While the former play was the third part of a trilogy within which the second play was censured for referring to the Eleusinian Mysteries (Sommerstein, p.122), the latter play was unlikely to have been staged in the Periclean Athens, and mainly for technical reasons (Sommerstein, pp. 301, 309-314). On the reception and effect of Aeschylus’ dramas as reading plays, we have evidence in Byron’s words (already cited in the Introduction): “Of Prometheus of Aeschylus I was passionately fond as a boy – (it was one of the Greek plays we read thrice a year at Harrow)” (*BLJ* V, p. 268). As I have shown in Chapter One, the reading of Classical tragedies facilitated the boys’ skills in the Classical languages and rhetoric.

irreverence towards the canonical religion which finally claimed Socrates' life. The contemporary reviewer, Robert Wilson, for his part, rebukes the subversive side of Byron's Socratic intertext:

The fire-worship of the Persians, the Nemesis of the Greeks, the fairy tales of our nursery, are brought into action, and what is worst of all, are combined with the appearance of Christianity. The least that can be said of this olla podrida is, that in taste it is execrable, its execution absurd (*RR B I*, 275).⁸

Thus, we are reminded of the accusations brought against Socrates, based on his introducing of non-canonical divinities in his frame of reference (*Defence* 24 b-c). In the above passage, *Manfred* (not Byron) is condemned on the grounds of being an absurd and execrable "olla podrida" lest its reader be corrupted against the canonical (Christian) values. However, Byron as the author of the morally subversive play is indirectly accused of introducing non-canonical gods, and thus involved in a Socratic dialogue with the contemporary audience.⁹

Since his bankruptcy and self-exile, Byron turned from Alcibiades, the golden boy of Athens, into a *sui generis* Socrates, who described himself as the gadfly of Athenian society (*Defence* 30 d). Byron's notoriety as an *agent provocateur* worsened with the progress of *Don Juan* and culminated with *Cain* until it was finally vindicated by his Greek endeavour on behalf of London Greek Society in 1823, followed by the poet's death. Today, Byron himself is inseparable from the Greek imaginary, where he figures as the instigator of the international cause for Greek independence.¹⁰ In consequence of what I have shown in this thesis, he seems to have followed his own compositions, amongst which *Manfred* appears to be the most timeless example of modern humanity's conversation with the Greek imaginary, as well as his own version of the Greek imaginary - a true myth-making heir to Prometheus and Socrates, whose speculative courage and intellectual challenge to its reader remains unmatched to this day.

⁸ Apparently, Wilson twists the poet's earlier words on "the mixed mythology of my own" from a letter to the Drury Lane manager Charles Dallas (*BLJ* V, p. 194), which was by then probably in public circulation. As I have shown in Chapter One, the "nursery tales" of Byron's childhood happened to be those featuring the Greek imaginary, including Plato's dialogues, which he might have started learning by rote in Dulwich, anticipating the more ambitious Classical drill of Harrow.

⁹ While Byron's negative view of the contemporary stage and his self-closeting of *Manfred* apparently follow the teachings of Plato's Socrates (e.g. *Ion*, *Republic* X), Plato's dialogues seem to offer a historical anticipation of the reading play in staging the intellectual *theoria* of Socrates' pupils, facilitated by the maieutics of their master, in the mind of the reader.

¹⁰ On the role of Byron in the Greek insurgency, and of his subsequent legacy amongst the Greeks, see Litsa Trayiannoudi, "A Very Life in ... Despair in the Land of Honourable Death': Byron in Greece", *Cardwell* II, pp. 419-438.

In the context of Byron's artistic development, *Manfred* is the harbinger of a twofold change, as outlined the Introduction. Significantly, the nameless personal guilt of the Byronic hero seems to expire with *Manfred*. On the other hand, the play introduces a shift in Byron's focus from the personal to the collective in introducing the possibility of an unjust cosmic order sustaining chaos and confusion amongst humans, as discussed in relation to the words of the three Destinies in Chapter Three. In effect, *Manfred* sets the type for Byron's subsequent dramatic compositions, all of which stage the hero's agony caused by a society, or a cosmic system, essentially lacking freedom. This lack of freedom is in return derived from a flawed cosmic godhead in charge of the Earth (e.g. *Cain, Heaven and Earth*), who is in return responsible for the flawed "law of the father" of civilization, epitomized by the patrician (Classical) tradition (e.g. *Marino Faliero, The Two Foscari, Sardanapalus*). In addition, *Manfred* may have functioned as Byron's personal redeemer, effecting his liberation from the nostalgic, backward-looking elements associated with Classical tradition, as discussed in the Introduction. Alternatively, *Manfred* appears to have facilitated Byron's use of the same tradition in a new context, by assuming a much broader, impersonal perspective on history and myth alike, a perspective developed from the Ancient Greeks (*BLJ* VIII, 152). After the death of Manfred, a modern Socrates and Prometheus and possibly the last in the line of Byronic heroes, Byron's Greek imaginary lived on. It was further promoted by a series of heroes whose issues were less and less those involving personal guilt and more and more dictated by collective or cosmic forces, spanning the heroes of his "studiously Greek" plays, the aristocrats lost to their patrician tradition (e.g. Mazeppa, Beppo, Don Juan, Arnold, Ulric), the non-substantial Shadow of Junius (*TVOJ* 585-668),¹¹ and two female dissidents, the sisters Anah and Aholibamah of Byron's "lyrical & Greek" *Heaven and Earth* (*BLJ* IX, 56), who chose "Angels" as their lovers as if on a cue from Manfred's lines on "the embrace of angels, with a sex / More beautiful than they" (*III.ii*: 6-7), from his farewell address of the "Glorious Orb". Especially in the case of

¹¹ Owing to his absolute impersonality, hailing from his mortal days when he had been "*really, truly, nobody at all*" (*TVOJ* 640), the Shadow of Junius can function as the epitome of the imaginary Greek democracy appropriated by the Whigs. Last but not least, the character establishes an associative connection with the Phantom of Astarte, similarly evoked to forgive or condemn Manfred, and with Manfred, who promises to be his own (destroyer) even "hereafter". I have already discussed some ideas and motifs shared between *Manfred* and *TVOJ*, respectively the motif of a winged entity temporarily abducting a portentous mortal (introduced in the cancelled Act III of *Manfred*), and that of the Abbot and the Spirit as the opposites of the same ideology, in Chapters One and Four.

Heaven and Earth, we must go back to Manfred and admit that the concept of his immortal mind, the sovereign universe containing its own “heaven” and “hell”, anticipates the two heroines who seem to have been born enlightened, and who effectively call up their two partners from a different part of the universe, and subsequently leave the doomed and benighted Earth in order to *live*, and live happily alongside their *angeloi*, instead of dying in the Flood with the rest of mankind.¹² From the point of my study, the play reads like a deliberate projection of Manfred-like characters into the far future, where ideological opponents can assert their “immortal minds” without having to pay the price of their physical life, and where people can travel to far destinations by air. Within a contemporary reading of *Manfred*’s contextual sequels, amongst which *Heaven and Earth* seems the most legitimate heir to the former play, Manfred is the ur-father of the independent modern mind, thus taking after *his* ur-fathers, Prometheus and Socrates, proving himself to be just as immortal, a mythic hero worthy of recycling, reclaiming, adapting, appropriating, of translation and transposition into the collective imaginary of posterity.

¹² The sisters Anah and Aholibamah are descended from Cain, whose character was in return shaped on the model of Manfred (e.g. *BLJ* VIII, pp. 36, 205, 206). Thus, the characters of the two sisters can be considered Manfred’s “grandchildren”. As we can infer from what Byron told Medwin, *Heaven and Earth* might have been left unfinished so as to allow the human sisters and their *angeloi* to be exempt from cosmic (in)justice, and to perhaps settle on another planet. Thus Byron: “I once thought of conveying the lovers to the moon, or one of the planets; but it is not easy for the imagination to make any unknown world more beautiful than this; besides, I did not think they would approve of the moon as a residence. I remember what Fontenelle said of its having no atmosphere, and the dark spots being caverns where the inhabitants reside” (Medwin, pp. 157-158). We are thus thrown back on Plato’s allegory of the cave, of Taylor’s discussion of the soul’s fall into matter, and of Manfred’s old issues before his *epopte*.

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